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The Influence of Loving-Kindness Meditation on Everyday Experiences of Being Angry: An Empirical Phenomenological Study

Ibrahim I. Kurdieh

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THE INFLUENCE OF LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION ON EVERYDAY
EXPERIENCES OF BEING ANGRY: AN EMPIRICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Ibrahim Ishaq Kurdieh

August 2014

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By

Ibrahim Kurdieh

Approved May 16, 2014

Eva-Maria Simms, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
(Committee Chair)

Russell Walsh, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
(Committee Member)

Anthony Barton, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
(Committee Member)

Leswin Laubscher, Ph.D.
Chair, Psychology Department
Associate Professor of Psychology

James C. Swindal, Ph.D.
Dean, McAnulty College and Graduate
School of Liberal Arts

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION ON EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF BEING ANGRY: AN EMPIRICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

By
Ibrahim Kurdieh
August 2014

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Eva-Maria Simms

Loving-Kindness meditation is a Buddhist practice than involves sending and receiving mental wishes of well-being and happiness in order to cultivate positive feeling states and relieve suffering. This qualitative study examines the effects of Loving-Kindness meditation on everyday experiences of being angry. It uses participants' accounts to create a systematic structural description of how Loving-Kindness meditation affects anger. Participants in this study were asked to provide written narratives of an incident when practicing Loving-Kindness meditation helped them cope with feelings of anger. Each of the five participants was interviewed in order to further elaborate their written narratives. These accounts were analyzed using the empirical phenomenological method in order to ascertain the most salient themes common to all participants. Strong commonalities emerged across participants' lived experiences of how Loving-Kindness meditation helped them cope with anger. Major findings revealed that this practice helped participants switch the focus of their attention from the

perceived wrongdoing of others back to themselves. In refocusing their attention to themselves, participants were able to come into contact with their own vulnerability and to gain greater awareness of their strengths and limitations. They were also empowered to better understand the broader context of the angering encounter, and to recognize their own contribution to the conflict. Participants found the greatest relief when they were able to see that the individuals who angered them are rich and complex human beings who are just as susceptible to suffering, and who are just as driven by internal motives and external circumstances as the participants themselves are.

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Finally, I dedicate this study to the benefit of all sentient beings. May all beings everywhere be safe, happy, healthy, peaceful, fulfilled, at ease, and free.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Loving-Kindness Meditation and Rationale for the Study

1.1 Introduction to the Practice of Loving-Kindness Meditation

Loving-Kindness meditation (henceforth LKM) is a practice that is based on offering and receiving mental wishes of well-being, happiness, and peace. In a common version of the practice, practitioners are asked to sit in a meditative posture and to visualize people who they feel loved by, usually referred to as benefactors (Makransky, 2007; Salzberg, 1995). The practitioner then imagines that the benefactors are bathing him or her in a soothing and loving light. This visualization is accompanied by the repetition of certain phrases such as “may I be happy, may I be peaceful, may I be free.” After receiving love from his or her benefactors, the practitioner extends the feelings of Loving-Kindness towards others. Others who receive the wish of love are typically divided into three categories: friends, strangers, and enemies (Makransky, 2007; Salzberg, 1995). One gradually extends love to loved ones, then strangers, then enemies—the assumption being that it is easiest to extend love to friends and most difficult to extend love to enemies. At the end of the meditation, the practitioner wishes happiness for all beings without exception.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

There is a consensus among disciplines concerned with psychological and physical well-being that anger, when enacted impulsively and unreflectively, can fuel actions that are harmful to self and harmful to others. Anger has been found to accompany a wide variety of psychopathologies including mood disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia, and PTSD (Novaco, 2010). Novaco also asserts that physiological conditions such as heart disease, hypertension, and high blood pressure are exacerbated by prolonged anger. Fischer (1998), who conducted a phenomenological study on anger, concluded that anger can be self-deceptive when

the protestor fails to recognize his or her contribution to the situation in which anger arises.

Salzberg (1995) asserts that from a Buddhist perspective, compulsive anger diminishes one's capacity to love and care for oneself and for other human beings.

Noting the above dangers of being angry, one might assert that anger should be avoided altogether. However, being angry is a powerful experience that arises inevitably throughout the course of life and cannot be avoided: "we cannot control anger's arising, we can only relate to it in a skillful way" (Salzberg, 1995, p. 68). Since becoming angry is unavoidable, what does one do when one is angry? One of the answers to this question provided by Buddhist literature is to practice LKM for the person we perceive has provoked our anger.

Buddhism lends itself easily to dialogue and collaboration with western psychology because both disciplines deal extensively with suffering, and both aim at specific therapeutic goals. To elaborate this point, let us examine some of the basic tenants of Buddhist doctrine. At the heart of the historical Buddha's teachings are four noble truths. The first noble truth is *Dukkha*, which is the most relevant to this discussion. It is typically translated as the condition of perpetual suffering that pervades life (Epstein, 1995). Although *Dukkha* is commonly translated as suffering, alternative translations include discontent, stress, and dissatisfaction (Epstein, 1995). What these other translations offer is the subtler sense that the Buddha was trying to convey, namely that throughout life we feel that something is not quite right, or that something is lacking. That this dissatisfaction is inherent to life does not mean that we must be miserable human beings. In fact, it is the acceptance and realization of *Dukkha* that allows one to transcend the state of perpetual discontent that pervades life.

Western clinical psychology also deals extensively with suffering and dissatisfaction. One of the commonly identified sources of suffering is unreflectively impulsive anger, and there

is a wealth of literature in both disciplines that addresses anger. Both Buddhist practices and western clinical psychology seek to understand, heal, and enhance the mind. Although the influence of Buddhist teachings on western psychology can easily be seen by anyone examining contemporary clinical research (see Literature Review), collaboration and mutual enrichment between the two fields is a relatively recent development.

In an important article in the *American Psychologist*, Walsh and Shapiro (2006) point out that, so far, the meeting of western psychology and eastern contemplative practices can be characterized by three historical stages: mutual ignorance, paradigm clashing, and assimilative integration. During the stage of mutual ignorance, which lasted until the mid-19th century, neither discipline related to the other. Each remained ignorant of the other due to social and material circumstances. Later, with the wealth of knowledge brought on by technology and multiculturalism, the two disciplines inevitably encountered each other in a clash of paradigms. During the second stage, the two disciplines were forced to confront each other. Initially, each discipline attempted to dismiss the other, thus limiting the possibilities of meaningful encounters. As the world grew smaller due to technological advancements and as access to the wealth of knowledge increased, more meaningful encounters between both traditions became possible.

More recently, the clash of paradigms between the two disciplines has partially given way to the third stage of interaction that dominates today, namely that of assimilation. For example, Carl Jung and Erich Fromm took interest in Buddhism during the early parts of the 20th century, and tried to integrate Buddhism within psychoanalytic frameworks (Chodorow, 1997; Fromm, 1960). Although the contemporary assimilative attitude of western psychology is more conducive to mutual enrichment when compared to the dismissive attitude that preceded it, it still ignores much of what Buddhist philosophy and practice have to offer. Using Piaget's metaphor

of accommodation, Walsh and Shapiro (2006) believe that, ideally, western psychology should move from assimilation to accommodation—meaning that western psychologists should study contemplative practices on their own terms and combine them with western practices in a deliberately non-reductionistic and pluralistic way. This study aims to adopt the attitude of accommodation towards the study of LKM.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Purpose of Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to define how this study fits into the larger body of literature, and to carve out a clear area of exploration. This Literature Review is divided into three subsections. First, it introduces the influence of Buddhist practice on contemporary clinical psychology in order to provide the broader context of this study. Second, it presents phenomenological and Buddhist accounts of becoming angry in order to develop an understanding of what anger might be. Since the meaning of anger is usually taken for granted in everyday language, the second subsection spells it out explicitly. Third, this section lays out the existing experimental research examining the benefits of LKM in order to demonstrate its potential.

2.2 The Influence of Buddhist Meditative Practices on Contemporary Clinical Psychology

Today, there is a wealth of literature in clinical psychology that addresses the benefits of Buddhist meditation. Contemporary experimental psychologists have taken up meditation practices in a way that fits within the natural science models. For example, Benson (2000) examined the relaxation response to meditation. Linehan (1993) takes up meditation as a form of meta-cognition. Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) all draw from the Buddhist practices (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Linehan, 1993) and have been clinically and experimentally proven to be effective in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and a number of personality disorders. Beyond its influence on experimentally based treatments, Buddhism has influenced other schools

of psychology including psychoanalysis, gestalt, and transpersonal schools (Epstein, 1995; Fromm, 1960; Hart, 2000; Ragsdale, 2004).

The Buddhist practice that has had the most powerful influence on contemporary clinical psychology is the practice of Mindfulness. Mindfulness is the practice of receptive presence that allows for experiences (thoughts, feelings, images, etc.) to arise and dissolve on their own accord. It cultivates a non-judgmental and accepting attitude towards all of experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Although Mindfulness forms the basis for many Buddhist practices, it is not the only prevalent practice. Another common practice, known as “Metta” is also considered to be an important practice (Salzberg, 1995). Metta is the Pali word for Loving-Kindness. It is defined as love without clinging. One of the major differences between mindfulness and LKM is that LKM relies heavily on active imagination and the deliberate generation of positive emotions. LKM aims to empower practitioners to actively and directly cultivate a state of unconditional friendliness and acceptance of all beings, as opposed to the goal of mindfulness to develop a somewhat passive and receptive attention to experience.

Although LKM could potentially be used to positively affect a variety of distressing psychological states, it is particularly well suited for working with anger because of its deliberate focus on self and others; it has an explicitly relational dimension. When one person is angry with another, it is difficult for him or her to wish happiness for the other person, since the other person seems to impede one’s own happiness. As we shall see in the results section, LKM empowered participants to see beyond the limits of self-centered protest.

2.3 What Does it Mean to Be and Become Angry?

The meaning of anger is often taken for granted. Anger is typically conceived of as an object that one “has”, especially in language. Anger, however, is a process and not a thing.

Becoming angry is a complicated moment-to-moment process that involves numerous factors that unfold over time (Fischer, 1998). In order to study how LKM influences being angry, one must first develop a preliminary understanding of what it means to be angry. To accomplish this goal, I explore the ways in which Buddhist and phenomenological perspectives define anger. The reasons for choosing Buddhist and phenomenological perspectives are obvious; this study examines a Buddhist practice from a phenomenological perspective. As for the cognitive and psychodynamic perspectives, they provide a basis for spelling out the clinical implications of this study later on in the Discussion section.

2.3.1 An Empirical Phenomenological Account of Becoming Angry

In an empirical phenomenological research study on becoming angry, Fischer (1998) offered a detailed descriptive structure of what it means to be angry from an Empirical-Phenomenological perspective. Though this account is too extensive to recount in detail, it offers many insights into the crucial elements of being angry that allow us to develop a “shared meaning” of what it means to become angry (p. 115). This is the most detailed and subtle account of becoming angry that I have come across, and will serve as a basis for understanding this study’s participants’ accounts of becoming angry. In her study, Fischer draws on four participants’ written accounts of an experience of becoming angry in order to formulate a phenomenological interpretation of anger. According to her findings, the initial stage that leads up to anger involves finding oneself blocked or frustrated. One gets caught up in the experience of being blocked with only a vague awareness of what exactly is causing one to become frustrated. One’s immediate reaction to goal blockage is to try to obtain one’s goal again or to consider other possibilities for action in order to resolve the tension that is felt in a specific situation. If no alternatives are perceived, the person’s focus shifts from experience of being

blocked to the perceived obstructer. One's focus turns away from one's own role in the situation and fixates on the malevolence of the obstructing object against a hazy but powerful "horizon of vague reminders of past obscurations" (p. 116). Fischer concludes that the implicit meaning of anger is that it is a self-righteous protest against being blocked from seeing one-self as "worthy" (p. 116). Bracing oneself to react against the obstruction, one erroneously directs the response to this threat towards the perceived obstructer.

Responding in protest at this point of intense focus on the obstructer is self-deceptive because the angry response is too narrow in focus; it neglects past "baggage" and ignores the wider context. The obstructer's malevolence manifests as someone or something that demeans, shames, and devalues. One is overwhelmed by helplessness and defends him or herself through charged protest and by doing so, one is blinded to possibilities alive in the moment. Instead of maintaining awareness, one focuses on the obstructer's "arbitrary and unjustified intrusion" (Fischer, 1998, p. 116). By buying into the self-justification that one offers him or herself, typically in the form of blame, one becomes ready to take action in order to thwart the one who thwarted us—one becomes angry. Here we chose to either take action and "give way to outward protest that conveys 'you can't do this to me'" or exercise noticeably visible restraint that is readily evident to others" (Fischer, 1998, p. 117).

2.3.2 The Nature of Anger from a Buddhist Perspective

In order to understand the Buddhist conceptualization of anger, we must first understand why Buddhism sees anger as a potential cause of suffering. The third of The Four Noble Truths is that the cause of suffering is attachment (Epstein, 1995). Attachment in Buddhism differs from the prevalent notion in western psychology. Attachment in western psychology carries positive relational connotations such as care, compassion and love, all of which Buddhism

promotes. In contrast, attachment in Buddhism implies both wanting to own and desiring to control the person or thing to which one is attached. In other words, one rigidly clings to the conscious or unconscious presumption that one's happiness depends upon others fulfilling one's wishes. Anger in Buddhism is conceptualized as a form of aversion—aversion being the “negative counterpart of attachment” (Salzberg, 1995, p. 62). Because of its aversive nature, anger can be dangerous when it severs connections to other human beings. When one experiences aversion to another in the form of anger, one may be disconnecting from positive aspects of the other because the other is viewed as threatening.

The Dalai Lama characterizes anger as an *afflictive emotion*: a state of mind that is marked by dissatisfaction and frustration (1997). He emphasizes the importance of knowing the causal mechanisms behind anger, adding that knowledge of the causes of anger helps alleviate anger. Anger begins as a state of general dissatisfaction, either with a specific problem or simply a general feeling of uneasiness. Dissatisfaction escalates to become condemnation towards what we perceive as an obstacle to happiness. When faced with an obstacle, and if we do not recognize our own contribution to the situation, we attempt to avoid the uncomfortable feeling of being wronged by attributing intentional malice to the obstruction. We become angry when we blame the malevolent obstacle. If the obstacle is a person, then one can potentially designate someone as an “enemy,” meaning that they are deserving of harm and violence. In contrast, a wise person will stop anger at an earlier stage, “rather than wait for the anger or hatred to arise fully,” the implication being that the unobserved and unexamined arising of anger plays out in hostility (Dalai Lama, 1997, p. 18). The Dalai Lama ultimately sees patience, and the ability to slow down the experience of anger as the key to appropriately responding to this purportedly afflictive state of emotion.

2.4 Is Anger Always Bad?

The presented accounts of being angry imply that being angry is usually bad. In the spirit of sophistication and subtlety, as well as drawing from personal experience, I believe that it is important to examine some of the beneficial aspects of anger. Anger, like all emotions, can be an informative experience. In the same way that fear alerts one to potential danger, anger can signal the need for action and attention. Suppose that someone gets angry for being called stupid by one's manager at work. Becoming angry in this situation signals the need to protect oneself from being degraded. In response to anger, one tells the manager that one does not appreciate being addressed with insults. Setting boundaries and self-assertion requires energy, and anger can provide this energy. Becoming angry in order to say no to harm and violation is healthy and appropriate, as long as one takes care not to act out of malice. Similarly, an athlete who is losing a tennis match may become angry in order to regroup and strengthen his or her performance. Alternatively, if one finds oneself easily angered over trivial matters, let us say for spilling juice on a shirt, then anger might be a sign that one needs to take care of oneself and reflect on one's irritability.

Not all of Buddhist literature I have come across addressing anger conceptualizes it as a strictly negative emotion. Salzburg (1995) characterizes anger as the "near enemy" of wisdom, meaning that it has many things in common with wisdom. Like wisdom, anger compels us to action instead of complacency. The Dalai Lama refers to "positive anger" as outrage against injustice and oppression; it compels efficacious and altruistic deeds (1997). However, he emphasizes the difference between anger and hostility, claiming that while anger can be positive, aggression is always unjustified. Note that this study presumes to be dealing with pathological anger. Examining the positive and non-pathological aspects of being angry is beyond the scope

of this study. For an extensive account of the more positive aspects anger, readers can refer to *Anger: the Misunderstood Emotion* by Carol Tavris (1989).

2.5 The Benefits of LKM

The Literature Review thus far has focused on the nature of anger. Now it turns its attention to the literature that explicates the benefits of LKM. In doing so, this Literature Review helps define how this study fits into the broader literature addressing the benefits of LKM. The literature addressed includes a qualitative study on the general benefits of LKM and contemporary experimental literature on the benefits of LKM.

2.5.1 Corcoran's Qualitative Study on the Benefits of LKM

In the only qualitative study focusing on LKM that I have found to date, Corcoran's grounded theory study (2007) investigated participants' experiences of LKM in order to discern how they have been helpful. She found that LKM helped participants who struggled with anxiety, depression, interpersonal difficulties, self-deprecation, and most importantly for the purposes of this study, anger. Corcoran also offered some specific clues about how LKM helps practitioners deal with anger. LKM brings to awareness the reality of the practitioner's suffering in anger. LKM also engenders in practitioners the awareness to recognize that the angering other suffers as well, whether their suffering is visible or not. Both the angry person and the person perceived to be causing the anger are in a state of mutual suffering. Recognizing this mutual suffering encourages the practitioner to feel empathy and compassion towards both parties. Several of Corcoran's participants said that anger is often a defensive and fearful response towards feelings of helplessness. LKM compelled her participants to respond to their feelings of fear and helplessness with compassion and acceptance. Due to its status as the only other

qualitative study on LKM, Corcoran's study will be extensively addressed in the Discussion section.

2.5.2 Contemporary Experimental Research on the Benefits of LKM

So far, the positive effects of LKM have been gleaned principally from the Buddhist philosophical literature. Another source for understanding the potential influence of LKM lies in the experimental research on LKM. What these studies show is that LKM works on two major levels: personally and interpersonally. On a personal level, LKM improves one's general sense of well-being, and encourages one to seek personal growth and self-understanding. On an interpersonal level, LKM promotes empathy and social connectedness. Personal and interpersonal factors interact in a mutually reinforcing manner; empathy promotes well-being, and in turn, an improved sense of well-being encourages empathy.

There have been a number of empirical studies conducted on the therapeutic potential of LKM to increase feelings of general well-being and social connectedness. Hutcherson et al. (2008) demonstrated that LKM increases social connectedness, and therefore improves an individual's general sense of well-being. LKM does so by cultivating feelings of care and compassion for oneself and others. In turn, these feelings affect behavior by increasing the motivation for pro-social behaviors. Likewise, these pro-social behaviors reinforce the practice of LKM and create a positive pattern of self-reinforcing behaviors.

In order to prove this hypothesis, Hutcherson et. al. (2008) created two experimental groups, one for the LKM condition, and the other with a neutral guided imagery condition. After assessing the baseline for each of the participants, each participant in the LKM group (n=45) was asked to close his or her eyes for about four minutes, and imagine two people that the participant loves sending their love to the participant. After four minutes, they were asked to open their

eyes and direct their wishes of well-being towards a picture of a complete stranger. Participants in the control group were asked to visualize two complete strangers in as much detail as possible and no one else. Results indicated that, even with such a short exercise (7 minutes total), the LKM group achieved a significantly greater degree of positive feelings in comparison with the control group who simply visualized two strangers. The LKM group scored significantly higher on positive emotion and connectedness scales. This study demonstrates that LKM increases feelings of general well-being and enhances a subjective sense of social connectedness. Recall from the discussion of anger that generalized discontent and feelings of isolation are both operating factors in the arising of anger.

Carson et al. (2005) demonstrated the effects of LKM by conducting an eight-week LKM intervention on patients suffering from chronic lower back pain. Participants engaged in weekly ninety-minute guided LKM sessions. Participants were also encouraged to practice on their own. This study measured a wide variety of psychological stressors. Two clusters of psychological distress emerged as the most alleviated by LKM: the anger/hostility cluster and the fear/phobia/anxiety cluster.

Social connectedness is also fostered by empathy. In order to demonstrate LKM's potential for fostering empathy, Lutz et al. (2008) conducted a neuropsychological study that demonstrated that LKM increases empathy. The study measured participants' responses to happy, neutral, and distressing sound effects before and after practicing LKM. The procedure involved using fMRI to monitor brain activity in the *insula* and *anterior cingulated cortices*, both neural circuits strongly implicated in the experience of empathy. Two groups of sixteen members were divided amongst the "expert" and "novice" conditions. Lutz et al. hypothesized that "the concern for others cultivated in this meditation would enhance the affective responses

to emotional human vocalizations, in particular negative ones, and that this affective response would be modulated by degree of training” (2008, p. 536). The fMRI measurements showed that both novices and experts demonstrated a greater degree of cortical stimulation to both positive and negative sounds during LKM than when the same participants were simply at rest. They also found that experts have a stronger response to sounds of suffering or distress in comparison with the novice group. Ultimately, the study demonstrated that during LKM, participants are more attuned to human joy and suffering because of the activation of neural circuits associated with empathy. If someone who is angry with another person develops a greater awareness of the reality that the other person also experiences joy and suffering, then the angry person might respond in a less malicious manner.

As with Hutcherson et al., Fredrickson et al. (2008) also wanted to establish that LKM improves one’s general sense of well-being, but for different reasons than Hutcherson’s study. Fredrickson set out to prove that LKM has two essential characteristics that are helpful in fostering a general sense of well-being. First, it directly fosters the experience of positive emotions by evoking visualizations of love and kindness. These experiences of positive emotions in turn have the effect of expanding awareness, as opposed to negative emotions, which tend to limit and narrow the scope of awareness. Second, LKM builds internal resources that “set people on trajectories of growth,” meaning that LKM encourages people to find a greater sense of purpose in life (Fredrickson, 2008, p. 1127).

To substantiate these two claims, Fredrickson conducted an experiment with two groups: a LKM group and a waitlist control group. The LKM group (n=67) partook in an intensive seven-week program that involved the daily practice of guided LKM through participation in weekly workshops, as well as extensive daily journaling. Measures of positive emotion included

scales that measured awareness, hopefulness, enjoying the moment, optimism, and growth. The LKM group obtained statistically more significant scores on all measures. The authors emphasized the idea that an increase in positive emotional experiences corresponds to an improved moment-to-moment awareness of surroundings. All the theories of anger surveyed thus suggest that anger narrows one's focus and may cause one to lose sight of one's contribution to an unpleasant situation in which anger arises. This tendency to narrowed focus is mitigated by the ongoing practice of LKM as we shall see in the Results section.

Beyond promoting awareness and compassion, LKM has also been shown to improve practitioners' sense of purpose and meaning in life. Johnson, Fredrickson and colleagues (2009) conducted three case studies on clients who participated in a LKM treatment group for schizophrenia. In two of the three cases, the study found that LKM was correlated with a noticeable improvement in negative symptoms such as anhedonia, asociality, and flat affect. More importantly, the authors found that LKM resulted in an improved sense of purpose in life. This improved sense of purpose resulted in greater optimism, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. Buddhist and phenomenological models of anger both identify the threat to one's sense of self-worth as being an important ingredient in the arising of anger. By fostering compassion for the self, LKM helps practitioners feel less threatened by the adversities of life.

The experimental studies reviewed thus far are relevant because they demonstrate that LKM brings about an improved sense of generalized well-being, an increased feeling of social connectedness, and a greater sense of purpose. These studies also suggest that LKM increases the possibility that practitioners will respond to different life situations with greater compassion and empathy. General well-being and greater compassion both compel people to respond to being angry in a more constructive manner. Although these studies demonstrate that LKM may

empower people to handle their anger more effectively, they do not show *how* LKM aides people in handling their anger. This phenomenological study reveals the experiential details of the process of how LKM can help participants deal with being angry more skillfully.

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Research Question

Before this study was completed, I did not know how LKM actively affects the process of becoming angry as it unfolded in an individual's experience from moment to moment. Hence the following research question presented itself: How does the ongoing practice of LKM influence the way one handles being angry in everyday life? This study answers this question by examining the lived experience of participants. It faithfully and rigorously captures participants' lived experiences, and tries to avoid predetermined constructs as much as possible.

3.2 Rationale Behind Choosing the Empirical Phenomenological Method

Drawing on Giorgi (2009), I answered the research question utilizing his exposition of the empirical phenomenological method. Given that this study is concerned with the lived experience of human beings, it is only appropriate that it should utilize a qualitative research method. There are numerous qualitative methods available for studying any given phenomenon. The empirical phenomenological method was chosen for this study because it aims to take the phenomenon of concern on its own terms, and attempts to minimize and render explicit my preconceptions. I did not want to examine how LKM fits in with existing paradigms. Instead, I wanted to describe it as thoroughly and as richly as possible so that its experiential meanings are not obscured by theoretical preconceptions.

It seems reasonable to say that thoroughly describing a phenomenon is necessary for its study, and reasonable to add that such a description should be the most fundamental and basic task at hand before a phenomenon can be understood or analyzed in any meaningful way. This study addressed the lived experience of particular individuals within their relational, animated contexts, and the empirical phenomenological method is ideally suited for this task.

3.3 Step-by-Step Procedure

Step 1-Recruitment

Giorgi (2009) recommends recruiting at least three participants. This study enlisted five participants. The recruitment criteria were as follows:

- Participants must be 21 years of age or older.
- Participants must practice LKM at least twice a week.
- Participants must have been practicing LKM for at least three months.
- Participants consent to provide detailed written accounts of their experiences.
- Participants consent to audio-recorded interviews that are to be transcribed and interpreted.

Before searching for participants, I sought out and obtained IRB approval from the Duquesne University Office of Research (see the approval letter in Appendix A). Afterwards, I sought out participants using a variety of methods. I tried contacting prominent Buddhist leaders known on a national level for teaching the practice of LKM via phone and email. I was unable to contact any prominent teachers. I also tried emailing Buddhist temples that had large memberships all over the country. I was unable to obtain any responses that way either. After these failed attempts, and after consulting with my dissertation director, I used a more personal approach to recruitment. I sought out local Buddhist teachers through personal contact instead of using email or phone contact. After about two months of searching, I found five volunteers to participate in the study. This number is sufficient according to Giorgi's method (2009).

Once I found enough participants, I sent each of them an electronic copy of the informed consent form. This form contained a variety of relevant information including a statement of purpose, an explanation of confidentiality, and an explanation of potential benefits and risks of

participation (see Appendix B). Participants signed the document and returned it electronically, thus consenting to the study.

Since I knew that I would be asking questions that pertained to details of personal life experiences, I surmised that providing the accounts might evoke feelings of vulnerability and reticence on the part of participants. In order to facilitate greater self-disclosure, I reassured the participants concerning the confidentiality of the protocols and interviews. Pseudonyms were used and all other identifying information was eliminated from all written work.

Step 2-Data Generation and Gathering

After signing the consent form, participants were sent the research questions (see Appendix C). One of the most important aspects of any good qualitative research is to ask useful questions that elicit relevant data. I developed questions that accessed the participants' life-world and explicated their experience. The first access question asked participants to write a detailed account of a particularly vivid and important experience of formally practicing LKM. This question served multiple purposes. First, it helped me understand the nature of the participants' practice. Second, it encouraged participants to enter a state of mind that would better prepare them to more thoroughly respond to the second access question. For the second access question, participants were asked to provide a detailed written account of a particular incident when the participant became angry and found the practice of LKM helpful with handling that anger.

First question

Recall your experience during a particularly significant loving-kindness meditation.

Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. In writing, describe your

experience as vividly as you can, including specific details to help me understand what it was like for you.

Second Question

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that loving-kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first question, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life. Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, and 4) what happened after that? How did loving-kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. Please write in detail so I can learn what it was like at the time.

After participants completed their written accounts, I asked them to email the accounts back to me. I then arranged a personal interview with each participant at a place that was confidential, private, and convenient for each of them.

Before interviewing a particular participant, I prepared for the interview by studying the written responses and conducting an initial interpretation of the meaning units in order to orient myself for the interview (meaning units are explained below in step 4). The purpose of the interview was to fill the gaps in their written accounts and to clarify and elaborate them. First, I asked each participant to read the protocol out loud and invited him or her to stop at any point to clarify or add to his or her account. I also informed participants that I would be interrupting them at points where I am seeking clarification or more detail. Second, I asked them questions about their written responses, which I had prepared beforehand. I also asked them questions

about unanticipated themes that appeared during the interview conversation. Full interview transcripts can be found in Appendix D.

Step 3-Reading Transcripts for a Sense of the Whole

Before embarking on the study, it seemed intuitive that any qualitative researcher should read the transcript data carefully multiple times in order to let it “soak in.” Any given phenomenon is more than simply the sum of its parts and therefore absorbing the meaning of the whole text was imperative if I were to meaningfully engage with the text. Furthermore, different parts of the text refer to the whole and the whole influences every part. I found it to be much easier to remember relevant data when I had a sense for the whole of the text.

Step 4-Determination of Meaning Units

As important as it was to have a sense for the whole of the text, the protocols and transcripts were too lengthy and complex to interpret without differentiation. This is where the question of how to divide the text for the purposes of analysis presented itself. Since I was engaging the text with a psychological eye, the text was broken down according to shifts in relevant psychological themes. As I read and reread the text, I marked perceivable shifts in meaning, known as meaning units. Each distinct passage that was marked off—a few words to several sentences—comprised a meaning unit. For practical reasons, it was not possible to retain all of the text for the purpose of analysis. Some repetitive descriptions or tangential elements were set aside.

Step 5-Transformation of Participant’s Expressions into Phenomenologically and Psychologically Sensitive Expressions

Once the meaning units were determined for a particular transcript, I constructed a table comprised of four columns (See Appendix E). The first column contains the meaning units in

their verbatim, transcribed form. The second column contains the first transformation, which is simply a “cleaned up” version of the verbatim meaning unit. The third column contains the second transformation, which is my interpretation of the essential psychological elements found in the meaning unit. Notice that certain phrases within the verbatim meaning units are underlined. These are phrases that I deemed important enough to remain untouched in the process of formulating the second transformation. Doing so struck a balance between remaining faithful to the original accounts but also presenting the analysis in a readable and clear manner. The fourth column contains the situated theme defined as a “condensation” of the essential psychological meanings to be found in the meaning unit (Fischer & Wertz, 1979, p. 156). Condensation can be understood as reducing meaning units to their essential psychological themes. These are the researcher’s interpretations of the psychological meaning of each meaning unit.

Step 6-Writing Situated Structures

After having formulated the situated themes for each participant, I constructed a situated structure for each participant. The situated structure is a descriptive account that clarifies the psychological meaning of the verbatim accounts by putting together a narrative out of the collection of second transformations. What resulted was a psychologically focused retelling of each participant’s story.

Step 7-Identifying General Themes Across Protocols

This step that involved comparing all the participants’ accounts with each other. When comparing all of the situated structures, I searched for general themes that applied to all participants. The goal of this comparison was to arrive at the fundamental meanings that are essential across the participants’ accounts. The principle way in which I tested whether a theme

was worthy of being included in a General Structure was to imagine what it would be like to remove that particular theme. If removing the theme did not take away from the general significance of the phenomenon of study, then it was considered unnecessary to include it in the General Structure.

Step 8- Arriving at the General Structure

The General Structure is a narrative of the shared psychological meanings common to all of the participant's accounts. It presented a "distilled" description of the most relevant and powerful findings observed across the situated structures. Its main purpose was to capture the common elements of the participants' experiences in a coherent and cogent manner. Fortunately, the narratives that the participants of this study provided unfolded temporally and allowed for a single, uninterrupted General Structure.

The General Structure is presented in the Results section in two steps. The first step presents each individual General Theme and supports it using quotes from participants' accounts:

General Theme 1

Supporting quote from participant 1

Supporting quote from participant 2

Supporting quote from participant 3

Supporting quote from participant 4

Supporting quote from participant 5

General Theme 2

.

Etc.

The second step involved compiling the General Themes and creating a unified narrative in the form of the General Structure.

Step 9-Bracketing and Reflexivity

When I was formulating the results, I wanted to avoid simply finding what I was looking for in the data. Giorgi (2009) relies on the idea of bracketing in order to separate the researcher's preconceptions from the phenomenon itself. Traditionally, bracketing in phenomenology has been understood as "putting out of play what we know about things in order to experience them freshly" (Walsh, 2003, p. 115). This attitude towards the text ideally allows the phenomenon to unfold on its own accord without the researcher's assumptions being forced onto the phenomenon, and thereby foreclosing possibilities of discovery and understanding. I hold, however, that complete bracketing in this ideal sense is impossible. Bracketing cannot be separated from our engagement with the world: "If engaged activity is our mode of being-in-the-world, then presuppositions are a part of the world [. . .] Bracketing becomes a process of explicating one's approach as inextricably part of the observed phenomenon" (Walsh, 1995, p. 336). I have modified Giorgi's method of bracketing by utilizing the concept and practice of reflexivity. In this empirical phenomenological study, reflexivity means "the researcher's concern for their own pre-reflective experience" (Walsh, 2003, p. 52). My motive for using reflexivity was to make explicit the concern of how my personal experiences, biases and expectations affected the research process. This process of reflecting on my pre-understandings in light of the results turned out to be a surprisingly fruitful platform for launching into the discussion.

Step 10-Discussion

The discussion section has several purposes. First, it compares the results of the study with my assumptions in order to observe the effects of my assumptions on the results (reflexivity). Second, it compares the results of this study with the existing literature on the same topic. Third, it spells out the clinical implications of this study. Fourth, it examines the strengths and limitations of the study. Fifth, it makes recommendations for future research. Lastly, it presents the conclusions of this study.

3.4 How the Final Procedure Differed from the Original Proposal's Procedure

The final version of this study deviated from the proposal in a number of ways, most notably in the case of the selection criteria. Originally, I wanted to exclusively recruit lay practitioners and to avoid working with monks. My rationale was that monks' monastic lifestyle and extensive experience with LKM would undermine the ecological validity of this study, given that I wanted the results of this study to be helpful for scholars and clinicians alike. Later on however, and after consulting with the chair of my dissertation Dr. Simms, I realized that monks are still susceptible to anger and experience real problems. I also realized that the fact they have more experience with LKM does not necessarily mean that LKM would have a qualitatively different effect on them as opposed to lay practitioners. In other words, I hypothesized that the process for both lay and monastic practitioners should turn out to be similar in quality, and would only differ only in magnitude. Fortunately, this revised understanding of this selection criterion panned out in the results; the process of how LKM helped participants cope with anger was similar in the case of both monks and laity.

Another recruitment criterion that has been changed since the proposal had to do with how long participants had been practicing. I originally specified one year of practice as a minimum. However, Corcoran's study (2007) required that participants had at least three

months of practice, and her study found that LKM had significant effect. Therefore I changed that criterion from one year to three months. Changing this criterion made the recruitment process much easier since the potential participant pool was rendered larger.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Recruitment Criteria and Participant Demographics

The criteria for participation in this study were as follows: each participant must have been practicing LKM twice per week for the at least three months, and had found that LKM helped him or her cope with being angry. The original participant pool of six people included three monks and three lay practitioners. One of the monk's accounts was excluded from the study. He misunderstood the research request and provided an account of when LKM prevented him from becoming angry in the first place, as opposed to an account when LKM helped him respond to *already* being angry. The final sample consisted of two monks and three female lay practitioners. The monks identified as Buddhists, while the lay practitioners expressed a strong affinity for Buddhism but did not strictly identify with a single religion. Of the lay practitioners, one was employed, another temporarily unable to work due to injury, and another retired. All identifying pieces of information such as names and places have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

Table 1 below presents relevant demographic data for each participant including age, occupation, frequency of practice per week, how long the participant has been practicing, and the duration of each meditation session. Some participants practice twice per day, as is indicated by a (2x). The last column lists other types of meditation practiced. The methodological complications resulting from a participant's engagement with multiple meditative practices will be addressed in the discussion section.

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Occupation	Frequency	How Long Practicing	Duration of sessions	Other Practices
Arvind	31	Monk	Daily	10 years	10-15 mins	Mindfulness
Jane	75	Retired	Daily	2 years	15-30 mins (2x)	Mindfulness
Kerri	47	Office Manager	Five days/week	1 year	10 mins	Calm Abiding
Mary	50	Electronics	Daily	6 months	30 mins (2X)	None
Rahul	35	Monk	Daily	Ten years	30 mins	Vipassana/Calm Abiding/Mindfulness

Table 1

4.2 Introducing Participants

The aim of introducing the participants is twofold. First, the biographical information presented in this section provides some context for the participants' narratives. Second, the reader will have the opportunity to see how practitioners tailor their practice of LKM in according to their needs.

4.2.1 Arvind

Arvind is a 31 year old monk from Southeast Asia who practices at a local Buddhist temple, and who has been living in the United States for four years. His family and most of his friends reside in his country of origin. When Arvind practices LKM, he focuses on his mind and waits for the thoughts of Loving-Kindness to arise spontaneously. He then sits with those thoughts and focuses on the sensations in his body. When images of people in his life arise, he wishes them happiness, well-being, and peace. He often practices Loving-Kindness in everyday

life “off the cushion” by repeating wishes of well-being for those around him as he is interacting with them. He has found LKM to be most helpful in dealing with interpersonal conflicts.

4.2.2 Mary

Mary is a fifty year old woman who grew up in western Pennsylvania. She suffered a severe concussion when she was injured in a car accident a few years ago. Consequently, she suffers from neck pain, back pain, migraines, and other physical ailments. Mary said that practicing LKM has significantly relieved many of these ailments. She sometimes directs wishes of well-being towards specific parts of her body that are in pain and finds focusing on them with Loving-Kindness to be helpful. Mary described herself as someone who has generally been quick to anger, but has found that LKM has helped her calm down. She typically practices LKM in the traditional manner of wishing well-being for herself then expanding the wish out to others.

4.2.3 Kerri

Kerri is a 46 year old woman who grew up in western Pennsylvania. She has been married for nineteen years, and is a mother of two boys who are six and eight years old. She and her husband are currently in the middle of a prolonged divorce process. Tensions have been building between the two of them for a long time. Kerri practices formally on a daily basis, and finds Loving-Kindness to be most helpful when she uses it “on the spot” in everyday life in order to deal with people who are angry or upset.

4.2.4 Rahul

Rahul is a 36 year old monk from Southeast Asia who has been practicing in a local monastery for five years. He is a PhD student in religious studies at a local university, and is heavily involved in Buddhist scholarship. His practice of LKM typically involves saying “May I be well, happy, and peaceful,” and then expanding that wish to all beings. Rahul likes to focus

on the feelings of openness and transparency that often accompany his practice. He finds LKM most helpful in relieving the pressure he feels from expectations placed on him by others, as well as expectations that he places on himself.

4.2.5 Jane

Jane is a 76 year old retired woman who was born and raised in southwest Pennsylvania. Her husband passed away about two years ago. She began Buddhist practice one year before her husband's passing, and her practice has only increased since his passing. She grew up in a traditional Christian family and has experienced many changes since she moved away from her family's faith. When Jane practices LKM, she usually begins by wishing herself happiness, well-being, and peace. Then she moves on to practice for the closest people in her life before gradually moving on to more distant acquaintances. She finds that LKM helps her accept her own imperfections and the imperfections of others.

4.3 Situated Structures

Each of the following situated structures attempts to capture the lived experience of an individual participant. A situated structure is a temporally and thematically ordered third person narration of a single participant's combined protocol. For the sake of clarity, some minor deviations were made between the verbatim accounts and the situated structures, but these deviations have little effect on the style or meaning of the text. Note that any value judgments made by participants are their own and do not reflect my position. For example, when the situated structure below states that "Kerri is in the middle of a very nasty divorce with a very defensive and verbally abusive man," this statement does not imply that this judgment is necessarily fair or objective. I have chosen not to add another layer of interpretation by saying

“Kerri perceives her husband as a defensive and verbally abusive man” because it detracts the flow and flavor of the original account.

4.3.1 Situated Structure for Arvind

After moving to the United States to practice being a monk, a friend from back home in Eastern Asia contacted Arvind in order to seek help for her terrible financial situation. Her husband was out of work and her children were miserable. Her condition was so bad that she was talking about suicide. Arvind felt so sorry for her condition that he decided to help her by giving her all the money that he had at the time. Driven by his deep sympathy and trust for her, he didn't ask for a written agreement and simply told her that she had to repay him at some point in the future. Furthermore, he offered to connect her with some foreign investors, and also gave her some hints about how to start a business. He assumed that she would use his money wisely by creating a source of income so that she could help her family and eventually pay him back. Arvind wholeheartedly expected that she would comply.

Arvind waited a year before asking for his money back. When he tried to contact her, she initially ignored his phone calls. She eventually picked up the phone but accused him of making trouble and disturbing her and insisted that she would pay him back later. Arvind was shocked by her dismissive attitude in light of how she had confided in him one year before. He perceived a dramatic shift in her attitude as she continued to act entitled to his money. As his doubts grew, a power struggle began to take place between Arvind and his friend. Arvind started to feel as though she grabbed all his money and thought that it belonged to her. What she should have done was to invest the money in order to earn some income and be able to pay him back. No matter how many times Arvind tried to explain this to her and to convince her that this was the best way, she ignored him. He implored her by reminding her that he gave her the money in a

time of need, and that he trusted with all his money in the hope that she would give his money back someday. She responded by continuing to avoid him and arrogantly accusing him of harassing her, thus further aggravating him.

When Arvind started realizing that he wasn't going to get his money back, he got so angry that the burden of his anger created an unbearable situation in his life. Rage filled him with questions about his own motivations and his friend's intentions. He began asking himself: "Why did I do this? Why did she do this? How could she do this?" Arvind could not believe that the sweet friend who so desperately asked for his help was suddenly so different. He also couldn't believe that she would do this to him, that she could steal his money. He wanted to act out and do something bad to her like destroy her reputation, and he even fantasized about killing her. Arvind's image of his friend was radically transformed from a benevolent trustworthy person into a malicious aggressor worthy of death.

As he became increasingly aggravated, Arvind started to wonder what was becoming of him. He felt so much anger, hatred, and frustration and had become so emotional. He recognized that his rage was causing him to suffer and he came to the conclusion that becoming enraged was not the way to solve the issue. He started to think that it was really hard to bear all this hatred in his heart. As he accepted these realities, Arvind began to gain perspective on the situation. He accepted that his money was gone. He also began to realize that he had lost many things in his life, so why should he be fixated on the loss in this particular situation?

Arvind decided to focus on his friend during meditation (this initial meditation was not LKM). He lit a candle and told himself to forgive her and prayed that she may gain the wisdom to solve her problems and become a better person. Then another important insight came to him; he realized that by being angry, he was getting involved in her trend, namely acting in an

arrogant and entitled manner. Instead, he wanted to do something totally different by responding with serenity and wisdom.

In spite of his efforts to let go of being angry and accept that his money is gone, Arvind continued to struggle with thoughts of revenge and restitution. He decided to confront her; he almost bought a ticket to fly over there and yell at her or even hit her. At the verge of buying the ticket however, he managed to step back and ask himself: “Why am I doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her? I’ll do something bad. Is that ok?” Arvind had to remind himself once again that he could not force her to give his money back. Finally, he thought that he did not want the light in his own heart to blow away, so he decided to try LKM in order to lighten the burden of his rage. It was so much easier for him to just relax and focus on thoughts of Loving-Kindness. As a part of the meditation, Arvind decided to intentionally bring a positive image of his friend to mind. He imagined her as he saw her before the incident with a beautiful smile, and she was also trying to solve her family problems. Doing so gave him a nice feeling in his mind and body and he wondered to himself why he wanted to do something bad in the first place, considering that he could have unburdened himself earlier.

A few months later (three years after the initial loan), she called him and promised to do her best to give back his money. Arvind did not care that she promised to do her best to return his money. He did not trust her anymore. However, he made peace with the fact that she was unlikely to ever return his money. His attitude towards the money fundamentally changed. Before soothing his rage he wanted his money back, but now he simply hoped that she used it for something beneficial. If she did, then he would be happy. If he learned that she used it for gambling or for other self-destructive purposes, then he would feel very sad.

4.3.2 Situated Structure for Mary

There was someone in Mary's meditation class who always came in late and drew attention to him or herself (let us call this person 'X'). X also shifted and wiggled and made grunting noises. Mary felt very aggravated by this behavior. X also leaned forward on his or her chair to the point that X almost touched person sitting below on a cushion (X typically sat on a chair behind most members who usually sat on a cushion on the floor). Mary found herself thinking that she was glad that she was not the person sitting on the cushion below X. She imagined the person sitting on the cushion below X saying: "Hey! Back away!" That never happened, but Mary would have liked that.

Mary became so agitated with X that she lost focus during mediation and became angry at what she saw as X's lack of respect. X was disrespectful in her eyes by being late all the time when the other students were far into the meditation. Furthermore, X was all over the place and hovering over others and making them uncomfortable. Mary saw X as failing to keep even the most basically respectful physical boundaries. She likened X's behavior to somebody sleeping on a neighboring passenger on an airplane. Mary's annoyance with X extended to the time after meditation when the group typically had tea together; she avoided X and even entertained the idea of yelling at X. She presumed that X's behaviors were purposeful and she would focus on how rude she perceived X to be.

However, after some time practicing LKM, Mary started to think differently. She realized that she was making up all these stories about X's motivations and actions, and that her judgments were not self-evident; they were interpretations. The next time she saw X, she started thinking that she did not know X's story. What if X had a problem that caused X to behave in this way? Maybe X had a back condition? Maybe it took everything in X's power to get to

meditation when X did? Maybe a hard day's work made X late? Mary found herself feeling bad for this person and sending X wishes of Loving-Kindness during meditation. She was able to meditate alongside X even with the distractions. Mary no longer saw X's actions as motivated purely by disrespect, and she was able to relax and ignore the shifting and grunting. She has even thought about going over to say hi to X during tea time.

Mary believes that Loving-Kindness meditation affected her in this situation by helping her feel more aware that no matter how she feels about the other person, they are connected. If Mary thinks negatively towards X, then her negative thoughts will affect her more than they will affect X. Recognizing this changed Mary's attitude towards her judgment of X and enabled her to understand that she has power and responsibility over her judgments. As her empathy deepened, her certainty about X's malicious motivations weakened.

4.3.3 Situated Structure for Kerri

Kerri was in the middle of a nasty and horrific divorce. She feared her husband, whom she perceived as defensive and verbally abusive, and she also feared for the future of her two children. Kerri found herself constantly second guessing her decisions because of her fear of inadvertently acting against her children's interests. These circumstances left her feeling emotionally and financially overwhelmed, and also feeling that her future was unpredictable and out of control. Stuck in a constant back and forth trying to make good decisions and avoiding bad ones, Kerri was afraid of saying the wrong thing to her husband because that might make him mad or affect their children. Between her fear of her husband and her fear for her children's future, she felt she did not have the time or resources to think of her own well-being. What little sense of normalcy she had in her life was constantly threatened by the looming divorce.

Kerri was convinced that her husband thought the louder and more vulgar he became, the more likely he was to get his desired outcome, namely for Kerri to admit that she was wrong and that he was right. Kerri felt as though she has become numb to the name calling and the put downs, while simultaneously remaining sensitive to other people's anger. During past arguments, Kerri handled his yelling in one of two ways: passively or actively. In the passive case, she protected herself by dissociating and going somewhere else mentally. In the active case, she joined the fight by justifying her side and trying to prove herself right. Depending on her mood, how scared she felt of her husband, and if her kids had to be somewhere, Kerri would decide whether she would be passive or active in any given argument.

With the usual sense of fearful anticipation of her husband's aggression, Kerri approached the argument in which she used Loving-Kindness. She and her husband strategically positioned themselves on opposite sides of the island in the kitchen when the argument started, as if to signal the start of a battle. This time, however, Kerri was determined not to cave and agree with him because of her own fears, or simply to justify her position. Instead, she tried to contextualize her husband's behaviors. There were circumstances in his past and others in the present that influenced his state of mind. His anger was only a symptom of deeper pain and suffering that was spilling over onto everything else, including Kerri. When he was a child, his parents divorced and his mother married a man who was "not the best man in the world." The situation at home was so bad that he had to live with his grandparents for some time. At the time of the argument, he had been suffering from financial difficulties, and his brother recently passed away.

As her husband's yelling ensued, she just kept saying in her head; "I wish you to be well, happy, and peaceful." After about forty five minutes of what felt like an uncontrollable assault,

something strange happened. For the first time, her husband's behavior changed dramatically. He stopped blaming Kerri and started calming down and reflecting on his behavior. The situation was no longer about her and about how she made him angry, but about the actual topic that started the conversation in the first place. Though he was still tense, as evidenced by the fact that he was pacing back and forth, he was no longer attacking her. Instead, he started blaming himself for screwing everything up. He also started shamefully wondering about what was wrong with him. Most importantly, he was able to have a constructive conversation with Kerri that was focused on practical matters. Kerri was completely surprised by his reaction and felt empowered by it. She used Loving-Kindness like a shield to protect herself from feeling threatened.

Recalling her husband's difficulties brought a new dimension to the conflict, namely a more empathic and understanding stance where she could better contain her impulse to react. Kerri believed that sending him Loving-Kindness defused the situation. She realized that it is in her power, or it is at least possible, to try to calm her husband down skillfully. Kerri described Loving-Kindness as a superpower that helped her keep him under control. She realized that changing her reaction affected her husband's actions. In prior confrontations, her natural instinct was to say in her mind: "You are an idiot. I hope a boulder falls from the sky and lands on your head. I cannot believe I married you." In contrast, Kerri now believed that such thoughts only fuel the argument. Although Kerri always kept such angry thoughts to herself, she now understood that they still affected the situation.

Kerri offered her explanation of how repeating the Loving-Kindness phrases in this situation helped bring about a different outcome. When she was angry with her husband, then her anger did not give her husband any option but to continue being angry. Unless she reflected

something better back to him, nothing would change. Reflecting Loving-Kindness phrases back to him, even if it was done in secret, served to break the vicious cycle of anger feeding anger. Loving-Kindness gave Kerri the space that she needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain. This non-participation in his anger gave her husband space to calm down and look at the situation through better eyes. She could tolerate and observe his anger while also understanding where it came from. He was over there, being angry, and she was over here, not being angry. She felt a heightened sense of autonomy in the face of a powerful pull to act out of fear and pain. She was no longer engaged in the anger and frustration of the moment. Before she began practicing, Kerri felt that her only option was to respond fearfully or angrily to her husband's provocations. Now she knew something that separated her from that tendency to react unreflectively.

4.3.4 Situated Structure for Rahul

Rahul received a request from a Buddhist organization in Malaysia to write an article for their magazine. He had no intention to do this at first. This was not a good time for him because he was very busy those days with his various obligations, such as writing papers for school and performing his duties as a monk in the temple. He imagined that the organization would have no trouble finding someone else to write the article. The magazine could go on as it is without his participation.

A month after receiving the initial request, the journal's organizer approached Rahul again. Since she made this request a number of times, he decided to make the time to write the article. He changed his mind out of sympathy, imagining that the journal had not been able to find another person to write on this topic, or that they needed extra help with this specific topic.

Before starting to write the article, Rahul sent the organizer an email informing her that he would begin writing the article immediately, and that he would send it within two days. Rahul sent this email because he wanted to make sure that the journal didn't find someone else to write on the topic, and that the need was still there for him to write it.

After sending this email, Rahul assumed that the organizer would reply promptly because she gave him the impression that the organization was pressed for time. When Rahul did not get any reply from the organizer by the next day, he initially gave her the benefit of the doubt. Though he was a little angry and scared that she may not respond in time to be able to publish his article, he thought to himself that she may be busy or preoccupied by something. He preferred not to make judgments until he had more information about her circumstances. So he kept himself optimistic that his article would be published if he wrote it in time, and so he kept on writing. He allowed himself to tolerate the ambiguity of her circumstances and kept the possibilities open.

During the two days Rahul allocated for writing the article, he was working on other things while finding some time slots to finish the article. His personal investment in having the article published was relatively small. However, as the end of the second day since he sent her the email approached, he realized that he hadn't finished enough of the article to be able to submit it on time, so he kept writing all night. The writing kept going and going and by the time he completed the article, it was five o'clock in the morning. After sending the article, Rahul went to sleep. He woke up three hours later and checked his email to see whether he received an email from the organizer confirming receipt of the article. He was anxious to hear back from her given all the effort he had put in and the looming deadline. He hadn't heard from her since the beginning of writing the article, and he wanted to make sure that she received it and was able to open it.

Sleep deprived and anxious to hear back, Rahul was facing the possibility that his intense efforts would be in vain. Rahul's fears came true when he received an email from the organizer saying that they no longer needed the article because the editing committee had changed the format of the magazine. Rahul felt really angry; he felt that the time and energy he spent during the night was wasted, and that his efforts were useless. The joy he felt earlier for completing the article on time was supplanted by a sense of anger and futility. Furthermore, he felt livid with the journal organizer. If she had informed him a little earlier, he would not have had to work so hard through the night. He also had feelings of rejection and hopelessness. The image he held of the organizer as someone in need of help transformed into an inconsiderate person who rejected Rahul and rendered his effort wasted.

As Rahul continued to think many angry thoughts about the journal organizer, the burden of his anger seemed too big to bear alone, so he sought out his friends for comfort and consolation. He also started to gain awareness that all these burdensome feelings were causing him to suffer. He became aware of unpleasant changes in his body and mind. Rahul finally decided that this was not the way. He also recognized that his reaction was a voluntary choice, and that he was causing himself to suffer; his feelings were not entirely the journal organizer's fault.

Rahul decided to watch his angry thoughts about the lady. He realized that he was blaming her in his mind for all of his suffering even though she lived a thousand miles away. The reality was that he was the one who was interpreting her actions in a certain way and who was giving her actions the power to cause him to suffer. Understanding this, Rahul changed his position from a passive victim to an active agent and resolved to get rid of this suffering state. This was when he decided to use his practice of LKM to deal with this situation.

In the beginning of his practice, it was difficult for Rahul to direct his wishes of Loving-Kindness towards the organizer because his mind was continually drawing him back to angry thoughts. He kept thinking: “She hasn’t done a good thing. She had made a mistake.” He was focused on her failure to communicate and his frustration with what he saw at the time as his wasted efforts. Sending thoughts of Loving-Kindness towards the organizer was not giving Rahul any relief. So instead of focusing on her, he decided to focus on himself; he directed wishes of Loving-Kindness to himself and wished himself happy, well, and peaceful. This seemed to work because he felt some relief after a while. His mind was beginning to gain clarity.

Amidst this newfound clarity of mind, a thought arose in him that he had not wasted anything. Releasing the judgment of wasted effort enabled him to want to find some goodness in the whole incident. He realized that he had not wasted everything because he had produced an article. Even though it wouldn’t be published right there and then, he learned a lot in the process of writing it and could be published it in the future. While Rahul was initially focused on the lost possibilities he wished had happened, he later opened to new other possibilities such as learning from the writing process and potentially publishing the article in the future.

After he felt good about himself, Rahul was able to open up to the idea of finding some goodness in the journal organizer. So he directed his thoughts to her to see whether she had demonstrated any goodness in their interaction. Trying to find good in her, Rahul imagined himself in her shoes. While doing so, he came to the important realization that she was merely coordinating the project, and that she did not have direct authority over it. The decision to include or exclude certain articles was the job of the editing committee with which she had little influence. Before this realization of her limited power, he was only focused on her mistakes.

Now he understood that she was only a kind of mediator. The malevolent power that he originally perceived that she held over him gave way to an understanding of the limits of her power. She now appeared far less threatening. She could not be fully responsible for the decision made by the editing committee, and therefore did not do any harm to him purposely. Her only real mistake was that she could have responded to his communication more promptly. Rahul also realized her mistake was unintentional and that she did not target him personally. At worst she was negligent in responding to him, but she was not purposely trying to harm him.

After obtaining a better understanding of the whole situation, Rahul decided to write her an email in friendly terms explaining how he felt when he received the email but at the same time how he understood her situation. Rahul expressed his disappointment and frustration without blaming anyone. When the organizer replied, she expressed a lot of regret, and confessed to suffering from a migraine that prevented her from working for two days. Gaining this knowledge confirmed his newly developed sympathy and compelled it to grow. He was also thankful that he did not reply to her when he was angry. Things could have turned out much differently if he had acted on his original interpretation that her actions were malicious.

After this exchange, Rahul's insight deepened; he understood that it was not her fault that he wrote all night, and the two day deadline that compelled him to work all night was self-imposed. In the beginning, he was projecting all the blame for his distress onto her. Then he realized that different conditions created this situation and that not any one person was responsible for the whole thing. It was true that she could have responded to him in spite of the migraine or at least informed him of the format change as soon as she found out, but it was ultimately his choice to write all night.

4.3.5 Situated Structure for Jane

Before describing the events of the main story, Jane provided some context for the incident in which she became angry. When she was a young girl, she would spend summers with her grandmother, who was very much in the mainline group of religious teachings. Jane loved her grandmother very much, but also realized that her grandmother was doing some things that she did not like. She was judgmental of anybody who didn't belong to her church or was not of her political persuasion. Although Jane loved her grandmother very much, her grandmother's behavior made Jane sensitive to negative judgment.

Now the main story begins. About a year after her husband of forty nine years died, Jane was thinking about getting outside of her grieving. Her life had changed on so many levels, and she thought it would be a positive move for her to become more involved outside of her own issues. She was beginning to come out of her shell and connect with other human beings, in spite of her continued grieving. She didn't much feel like reaching out, but knew it was something she needed to do.

A friend invited Jane to join her in attending a religious women's group that met once a month for lunch. The friend who asked Jane to join was someone she had known for a few years as a fellow member in a different (non-religious) women's interest group. Although Jane once shared the same beliefs as her friend, this was no longer the case. Jane had decided that her friend's choice of religious practices was not for her anymore. Her friend's evangelical style of religiosity had started to really make Jane uncomfortable. A part of Jane's complicated feelings towards her friend stemmed from no longer belonging to the same mainstream religious group; Jane feared being ostracized for abjuring her old system of belief. At the same time, she still wanted to keep good relations with the women's group, and so she wasn't ready yet to come out

and say “this isn’t for me” for fear of being judged or rejected. A tension was building between wanting to be accepted but also wanting to assert her differences with her friend and the group.

The format of the women’s group meetings was to have lunch and then a time of sharing. Each person in the group was supposed to talk about the events in her life and ask for prayers for the problems each of them was dealing with at the time. Jane, however, was still grieving for her husband and it felt too soon for her to be asking for prayers. When group members would pray that their deity would take care of them, Jane just sat there brewing in discomfort. In spite of her discomfort, and in order to maintain good rapport with the group, she just let the prayer requests slide without objecting in any way. Jane also was not the only one in the group who did not participate; some women let their turn pass and did not ask for prayers. Besides, Jane had shared her grief in other situations where she felt more comfortable, but this situation made her too uncomfortable to do so.

One year after beginning the women’s group, Jane wanted to go to Ohio for vacation so she invited her religious friend and another friend to accompany her. They initially seemed like a good match for enjoying the area together. Things went well at first as the three friends enjoyed swimming, hiking and sightseeing. Then one evening as Jane, her religious friend, and the third friend sat around the living room chatting, the topic came to religious beliefs. The third person in the party made some strong statements against her friend’s religious beliefs and practices. She came down really hard and said that the religious friend’s beliefs were “all bullshit” to her and she didn’t want any part of it.

At this point, Jane’s misgivings about her friend’s religious beliefs came to the fore, and there was no easy way to avoid revealing her true feelings to her friend as she normally did in the women’s group. Without thinking about what she wanted to say, she blurted out a full

agreement with the other person against her religious friend. Having an ally there helped her voice her opinion. In retrospect, Jane felt like the whole situation was not a fair deal because she was forced to take sides. The situation formed a triangle which caused all kinds of problems.

After returning to the monthly group, Jane began experiencing an attitude shift. She began to focus on, and take inventory of, her religious friend's judgmental statements. She became very aware that her religious friend had used such statements regarding difficult people in her life as "the lowest piece of humanity." Increasingly critical thoughts invaded Jane's mind, most of which revolved around the theme: "If you're spiritually so great, why are you saying that?" Jane was growing more defensive because she was afraid of being listed in her friend's thinking as one of "the lowest pieces of humanity." She was angry with her friend because she came off as being very self-righteous. Jane's anger manifested in her body; she felt stiff, with her shoulders pulled forward and arms crossed in front of her as if she was protecting herself from her friend's judgments. Jane wanted to withdraw from her friend and not be around her. She started avoiding the women's interest group meetings and found any reason not to go.

As Jane's conflict with her friend carried on, she was becoming more involved with LKM at the meditation center. The congregation was practicing using LKM for themselves and others. After practicing for a few months, some interesting things began to happen. Jane started thinking more kindly of herself when she made mistakes, like saying something sharp to a family member, or speeding on the highway, or "hogging" a swimming lane. She was growing more aware of her imperfections in an accepting and non-critical manner. Recognizing and accepting her shortcomings brought Jane great relief. She knew that she would continue to make mistakes, but this fact didn't bother her anymore. She developed the belief that people are living best when they focus on their mistakes in the spirit of positive change. Jane felt liberated by the

experience of being conscious of her imperfections. She could even forgive herself for siding against her friend during the Ohio vacation. She had initially felt completely justified in criticizing her friend. Now she was questioning that justification by considering that her actions may have played some role in the rising tension between them.

Jane's sense of responsibility grew even further when she realized that she could also decide that if someone viewed her as "the lowest piece of humanity" that such a judgment did not have to apply to her unless she allowed it to. Recognizing her mistakes and owning her judgments empowered Jane to feel protected from other people's critical judgments, as well as from her own critical judgments. Allowing herself to be imperfect meant that others were likewise allowed to be imperfect. Having recognized some of her contribution to the conflict between herself and her friend, Jane decided that it was time to practice LKM for her friend.

At first, and in spite of practicing LKM for her friend, their relationship did not improve. Jane's friend continued to say all the things that "ticked her off." She still felt tense and withdrawn around her friend. Over the next few weeks however, Jane gained further insight. She was becoming aware of how much she was judging her friend and in some sense doing the same things in her thinking as her friend was doing in words. Jane went even further to recognize that the only reason she didn't vocalize her judgment was that she did not want to disclose her new form of spirituality for fear of being ostracized.

Jane decided that she wanted to rid herself of the attitudes and judgments that she had carried around without knowing. She shifted her focus from her friend's actions to her negative judgment of her friend's actions. She realized that such judgments are not statements of facts but volitional actions with real consequences to herself and others. Realizing how her judgments affected her (self) in a negative way, she concluded that they hurt the person who judges far

more than they hurt the person who is being judged. Jane's newfound awareness made her take a good look at herself and at how being angry had contributed to their strained relationship.

Taking responsibility for her role in the tension between them led Jane to feel relieved in her body and mind. Her posture was no longer defensive at the meetings, and she felt more relaxed, like she was not carrying around a bag of bricks on her shoulders. It took many more months practicing LKM and letting go of negative judgments before things started to change between Jane and her friend. Over time, there were fewer instances that she found herself with her arms crossed in front of her so as to feel in control. She could relax more and focus on her own self-process instead of on her friend's expressions.

Jane started to become more attentive to her friend when she spoke, and started noticing that her friend made friendly comments and not only negative ones. They started laughing together again about funny things in their lives and spent less time dwelling on problems. Having changed her attitude towards her friend, she could relax and focus on the positive, which in turn prompted her friend to be less serious and more relaxed. One day after their relationship had been improving, Jane ran into her friend at a grocery store. Jane talked with her for so long that she was late to her next appointment.

Jane admitted that it was difficult for her to write this account because she realized how much she was influenced by her anger toward her friend, and had never realized that she could do anything about it. It was difficult for her to admit to herself that she had a hand in becoming angry, and that she had the power to do something about it. Jane concluded her account by stating that LKM affects the person who does it as well as those to whom it is directed. She sees it as a positive transformative force in her life and the life of those who she does it for, and intends to practice it for the rest of her life.

4.4 Illustrations of the General Themes

In order to glean the most salient themes common across participants' accounts, I constructed a data table for each participant (see Appendix F). As described in the Method section, I took a close look at the common themes across participants in order to come up with general themes. Each general theme represents a motif common to every account. When I was examining the themes that spanned all of the participants' accounts, I noticed that they formed a temporal narrative that responded sequentially to the following guiding questions:

- 1) Within the context of their stories, what were participants' habitual expectations of self?
- 2) What were participants' habitual expectations of others?
- 3) How did participants specifically relate to the person that angered them before the angering encounter?
- 4) What were the participants' initial responses/reactions to the angering encounter?
- 5) How did the participants act out their anger?
- 6) What motivations did the participants attribute to the other?
- 7) How did participants relate to the angering other as time went on?
- 8) When/how did participants decide to practice LKM?
- 9) How were participants engaging in the practice of LKM, specifically in relation to the angering other?
- 10) How did practicing LKM affect participants' perception of the situation?
- 11) How did practicing LKM affect participants' understandings of self?
- 12) How did LKM affect participants' understandings of the other?
- 13) How did LKM affect participants' relationship with the other?

The General Themes laid out below present the consolidation of common themes that applied across participants, and each General Theme answers one of these thirteen questions. Each General Theme is followed by verbatim quotes from the different participants that help support the General Theme. Note that not all quotes will explicitly support the associated general theme. A minority of quotes support the General Themes only after fleshing out their implicit psychological meanings. For example, when Mary said “At first it was just about them being annoying,” she was implicitly saying that she had grown to expect that this person would always act in an annoying way. This quote does not contain the word “expect,” yet it implies expectation. Refer to the Method section to find the details of this process of unpacking explicit psychological meanings. Also note that in two instances below, the participant was not directly quoted because the theme cannot be gleaned from any single part of the text, but by reading the whole transcript (see Appendix D for transcripts). The text between square brackets indicates questions raised by the interviewer.

- 1. Habitual Expectations of Self: The Participants’ stories began within the context of their respective life-worlds. As they moved through the world towards their projects, they created expectations and beliefs about themselves. They believed that they were on the right path to being good people who are competent in their respective social roles as monks, students, wives, mothers, or friends. Participants saw themselves as generous, focused, esteemed, altruistic, independent, striving to be connected, and generally worthy of dignity and respect.**

Arvind

“This is my personal experience. One of my close friends asked [for] some of money from me.” [Can you say something about your relationship with this friend?] I know her very well and she’s a Bengali friend and so she was in terrible situation financially when I met her. And actually sometimes she wanted to committed suicide.”

“Then I told her I’m so sorry I have to help her. That’s why I gave her actually all of the money that I had at that moment. [All of your money?] All of money.”

Mary

“There is someone at [meditation] class who always comes in late and shifts and wiggles around and makes noises. I would get so agitated at them that I would lose my meditation.”

Kerri

“My true life experience when I tried to use Loving-Kindness in my life was actually quite recent. I’m in the middle of a very nasty divorce with a very defensive and verbally abusive man. [What is it like for you to be in the middle of this circumstance?] It’s horrific, especially when you have two kids, and it’s no longer about you, it’s about making sure that everything plays out well for them and trying to make the right decisions financially [and] emotionally. It’s just very very overwhelming. And you have to second guess everything you do. You can’t say anything that’ll make him mad. You don’t wanna do anything that will harm the kids. It’s just a constant back and forth between right and wrong and it’s horrible.”

Rahul

“Last year a Buddhist organization in Indonesia requested an article from me for a magazine. They proposed a topic to me. I was very busy with my studies those days. I told them that I would not be able to do this. However, after a month, a lady who coordinated this project approached me again and asked me whether I can do it. Since they made this request a number of times, I thought to find some time and write this article. [What compelled you to write the article?] One thing is that when they requested a few times I thought that maybe they have not been able to find another person to write on this topic and so I thought maybe they need help on that particular topic.”

Jane

“About a year after my husband died, a friend invited me to join her in attending a women’s group that met once a month for lunch. I was still in the process of grieving and dealing with a big lifestyle change so it seemed that it would be a positive move for me to become more involved outside of my own issues. [Can you say something more about this sense or desire to want to be involved outside of your own issues?] I guess I just knew that it was time for me to get outside of the grieving. I needed to reach out and to be with other people.”

“[So you were going through a difficult period because you were still grieving for your husband?] When there is a death with somebody so close your life changes at every level. It’s not going to go back to what it was so I better start thinking about this new or different life I have and this seemed like an opportunity to start to do that. [So you wanted to come out of your shell a little bit?] I didn’t feel like it but I knew it was something that I needed to do. [If you don’t mind me asking, how long were you married to your husband?] I was married 49 years.”

2. **Habitual Expectations of Others:** Similarly, the participants grew accustomed to relating to others in certain ways and expected that others would not deviate from these expectations. Consequently, participants reacted to others' actions in a way consistent with such expectations. Depending on their current dispositions towards others, others were painted in a positive or a negative light. Others were seen as trustworthy and competent, or conversely as disruptive, verbally abusive, or judgmental. When participants had highly ambivalent relationships with others, they expected others to do something upsetting. In the case of good relationships, participants expected others not to get in the way. Participants carried on with the assumption that others are unlikely to act in a manner that is contrary to one's preconceptions. A "good" person is expected to do good things, and a "bad" person is expected to do bad things.

Arvind

"[T]his kind of business will help you and I can help you finding some other business people from outside the country and also you do something very good and you can become well and also you can treat your children."

"But I trust her very well because I thought she will run a business."

"I don't have any legal documents with you. So it is your duty because you're in a real bad situation that's why I help you."

Mary

"...[And I would] get angry at their lack of respect."

"[A]t first it was about her just being annoying."

Kerri

"He seems to think the louder and more vulgar he becomes, the more likely he is to get his desired outcome."

"Any conversation that we engage in that doesn't involve our children results in a test of patience for me."

Rahul

"[What compelled you to write the article?] One thing is that when they requested a few times I thought that maybe they have not been able to find another person to write on this topic and so I thought maybe they need help on that particular topic."

"Then I replied to her that I would send this article. Just before I started to write this article I sent her an email informing her that I started writing this and would send it within two days."

Jane

“She was pretty judgmental about anybody who didn’t belong to her church or anybody who wasn’t of her political persuasion.”

“I was angry with her because she came off as being very self-righteous.”

3. **Assumptions about the Specific Person Who Angered them Before the Encounter: If participants expected others to offend, then they approach the angering encounter with a constrained and defensive disposition; they were already on their way to becoming angry. Conversely, if they expected others to do the right thing, but these others acted contrary to their expectations, then participants experienced surprise and confusion before becoming angry. In the case of feeling confused by others who acted contrary to their expectations of being good, they tried to recover their original understanding of the other, e.g., by giving the other the benefit of the doubt, or by trying to convince the other to correct his or her ways in accordance with the participant’s original expectations. Alternatively, if they were expecting others to behave badly, then they approached the encounter with the sense of “here we go again,” which is a sense of futility and inevitably continuing frustration.**

Arvind

“Several times I explained her that is not the way. You can earn some money and you can return it then if you can do that that is the best way because I trust you. I don’t have any legal documents with you. So it is your duty because you’re in a real bad situation that’s why I help you. I explain her but she said all the time ‘No I have not done this...I don’t have money at the moment.’”

Mary

“I would be very aggravated because they didn’t just wiggle, they would do this (leans forward). If someone would be in front of them and they would be this much from their head (gestures with her fingers to indicate a few inches). [On the cushion?] They were on the chair and they kept you know making noises like grunting noises.”

“I would find myself thinking I am glad I am not that person sitting below them. [What do you imagine the person below them is experiencing?] I think they were annoyed too and after a while they would turn around and look. So I think they weren’t too happy either. So it was more than me that was being disrupted.”

Kerri

“On this occasion we were standing in the kitchen, the island strategically positioned between us, and it started. I was determined in this instance not to cave and agree with him just because of my own fears.”

“[Can you say something about what it’s like for you to be in this state where you are being shouted at?] For me, I’m pretty good at dissociating. So I tend to just go somewhere else. I usually am able to just stand there and just let him go about his business, and I can just think about something else. But if I act, I can either

take that approach or become very defensive myself and my sole purpose when I become that way, my sole purpose is just to convince him that I'm not wrong, that no! This is better! And then I'm always justifying, defending. That all depends on the mood I'm in. If I'm scared how angry he is, and what kind of time frame we have. If I have enough time to let him stand there and work itself out, then it takes a different course. But if the kids have to be at soccer then you just give in and say...ok...whatever...that's fine...we have to go to soccer."

Rahul

"I did not get any reply from her [How did you feel when you didn't get a reply from her?] A little angry because you know, I was a little scared, maybe she is busy?"

"So it's not clear to me so I prefer not to make judgments. I kept that open. Who knows what has happened? Maybe computer broke down, I don't know. So I just keep myself optimistic and just keep on writing."

Jane

"After the return to the monthly group I was very aware that my friend had used such statements regarding difficult people in her life such as her daughter's brother-in-law, her wayward son, and her ex-husband as "the lowest piece of humanity." [So what's it like for you to hear someone described as the "lowest piece of humanity?"] It really ticked me off. It was like: hey look what you're doing to yourself first of all when she described somebody very close to her in that way. And then I began to think: If you're spirituality is so great, why are you doing that?"

- 4. A Sense of Being Wronged: Participants were angered for various reasons, but all felt wronged. Once angered, participants felt that the other should treat them well, i.e., not block their projects or violate their expectations of themselves or of others.**

Arvind

"Later when I asked about money, she just ignored me and said this and that. She didn't answer the phone most of the time. If she answers then she says: "Why you are trouble making? Why are you disturbing me? Why you asking money now? I don't have money. I don't have it now." That means she would get really angry. She thought that I am disturbing her and she thought that I am doing something very bad to her."

"She didn't commit to run a business properly and become more rich person and do her own things properly. Instead of that she thought ok I have to grab all the money and keep it with me. But several times I explained that is not the way. You can earn some money and you can return it then. If you can do that, that is the best way because I trust you. I don't have any legal documents. So it is your duty because you're in a real bad situation that's why I help you."

Mary

“For me you should keep some type of boundary you know. ‘Cause everybody is there for their own reasons and someone you don’t even know is on top of you. It’s like somebody sleeping on you in the airplane.”

“If someone would be in front of them and they would be this much from their head (gestures with her fingers to indicate a few inches). They were on the chair and they kept making grunting noises and stuff.”

Kerri

“On this occasion we were standing in the kitchen, the island strategically position between us, and it started.”

“I was determined in this instance not to cave and agree with him just because my own fears.”

Rahul

“She should have been better in communicating with me.”

Jane

“If you’re spirituality is so great why are you doing that?”

“So then I began to feel like that way of practicing religion or practicing spirituality was to expect that someone else would save us or take care of us. That started to really make me uncomfortable. I began to feel like I had been given everything that I needed to take care of myself and to so-called save myself.”

5. Protest: Participants became angry and felt slighted and disrupted by others’ behaviors, and defended themselves against the slight of others through a variety of active or passive (but ultimately goal-undermining) methods that included avoidance, lashing out, self-righteous condemnation, and fantasies of revenge

Arvind

“I had anger. I want to do something bad for her. That means just destroy the business or destroy the reputation and tell to other people that she did something real bad for me and this is what I felt. Sometimes I thought that I want to do something so bad for her. So bad actually sometime I thought that it is better to kill.”

Mary

“I just could only focus on them and how rude I perceived them to be. I find myself even annoyed at them later when we were all having tea! [So you were kind of carrying a grudge]. I didn’t want to be around them. If they went that

way, I'd go the other way. I was like (gestures by turning her back). I didn't want any part of them."

Kerri

"My natural instinct would have been to say in my mind: 'You are an idiot! I hope a boulder falls from the sky and falls on your head!'"

"But if I act, I can either take that approach or become very defensive myself and my sole purpose, when I become that way, is just to convince him that I'm not wrong...that no ... this is better. And then I'm always justifying and defending."

Rahul

"As soon as I saw this email, I felt really angry. I felt that all the time and energy I spent in the whole night was wasted. The whole reason I got angry is because I spent whole night writing this and I felt that now they're not going to use the article, and so I felt frustration also particularly angry with useless."

"I felt angry with the lady who coordinated this project. If she informed me this little early, I would not have to work so hard in the night. Also feelings of not being welcome and not being accepted and also kind of losing hope."

Jane

"Without thinking of what I wanted to say I blurted out a full agreement with the other person against my friend. There must have been a dialogue between the two of them. And then, the other friend came down really hard. She said "this is bullshit to me and I don't want any part of it!" I pretty much said: 'ok!'"

"I felt that I wanted to withdraw from her and not to be around her. I found myself not wanting to go to the meetings and finding any reason not to go."

- 6. Blaming the Angering Other: Participants overtly or covertly directed objection, blame, and protest towards the angering others who were characterized with all sorts of negative attributions: as arrogant betrayers, as maliciously disrespectful, as verbally abusive, as negligent and irresponsible, or as judgmental and self-righteous. Such attributions arose during the offending incident or may have been longstanding judgments, depending on each participant's disposition towards the angering other as the participant went into the encounter. Participants may have seen others as continuing to be bad or as individuals who were once good but have now become bad.**

Arvind

"She didn't really understand what she did...anger...I don't know what...that is the anger...I had anger...I want to do something bad for her."

"Sometimes it looks like she's arrogant."

“After she got the money from me she thought that the money belongs to her.”

Mary

“I would get so agitated at them that I would lose my meditation and get angry at their lack of respect.”

“I would find myself thinking I am glad I am not that person sitting below them.”

“[A]t first it was about her just you know being annoying.”

Kerri

“I’m in the middle of a very nasty divorce with a very defensive and verbally abusive man.”

“He seems to think the louder and more vulgar he becomes, the more likely he is to get his desired outcome.”

Rahul

“I realized that I am blaming her all the time.”

“She hasn’t done well, so she has done a mistake.”

“If she informed me this little early, I would not have to work so hard in the night.”

Jane

“Look what you’re doing to yourself first of all when she described somebody very close to her in that way. And then I began to think: “If you’re spirituality is so great, why are you doing that?”

“I was angry with her because she came off as being very self-righteous.”

- 7. Rumination: In all cases, participants focused on and ruminated about the angering other’s (real or perceived) purposeful and malicious actions, and thereby lost sight of any personal culpability. As they became angrier and angrier, their perspective on the situation became increasingly myopic and strained. This kind of tunnel-vision was counter-productive because it posited the participant as a disempowered victim, even when that was not necessarily the case.**

Arvind

“I feel so much of anger and hate and frustration all sort of bad things, I blow up myself and become so emotional.”

“I have lost not only this money I have lost so many things in my life...why I am worried about only this particular situation?”

Mary

“I just could only focus on them and how rude I perceived them to be. I find myself even annoyed at them later when we were all having tea!”

Kerri

“[I] become very defensive myself and when I become that way, my sole purpose is just to convince him that I’m not wrong...that no ...this is better. I’m always justifying and defending. If I have enough time to let him stand there and work itself out, then it takes a different course, but if the kids have to be at soccer then you just give in and say: ‘ok...whatever...that’s fine...we have to go to soccer.’”

Rahul

“My focus is on that the lady didn’t communicate with me.”

“[A]nd your mind is pulling you, she hasn’t done well, so she has done a mistake.”

“I felt that all the time and energy I spent in the whole night was wasted.”

Jane

“I felt a great attitude shift in myself, mainly because I thought I would be listed in her thinking as one of these ‘lowest pieces of humanity.’”

“I felt that I wanted to withdraw from her and not to be around her. I found myself not wanting to go to the meetings, finding any reason not to go.”

- 8. Recognizing Suffering in Self: Over time however, participants grew exhausted of straining themselves in the process of blaming the other. There came a point when they realized that continuing their current course of being agitated and frustrated was uncomfortable and unpleasant, and that life would be better if they could find a way to diffuse ongoing feelings of frustration and blame. This realization of wanting relief from frustration confronted them with the question: “How do I do things differently?” Faced with this choice, they decided to cultivate the practice Loving-Kindness.**

Arvind

“Then I got so angry, it was unbearable situation in my life. [Can you say something more about this unbearable situation?] I felt so heavy myself. I had a lot of anger, frustration.”

“I thought this is not the way to solve this issue. Actually sometimes I talk with my friends about this situation. I thought ‘What I am before that actually before I started practicing Loving-Kindness?’”

“But I do not want to harbor hatred in my mind and pollute my mind. I started to practice Loving-Kindness for myself and for her.”

Mary

“I’m thinking negatively towards them, then it’s only gonna come back and affect me.”

“I think it just made me feel more aware that no matter how I feel about the other person that we’re connected.”

Kerri

“I was determined in this instance not to cave and agree with him just because my own fears.”

Rahul

“However, I begin to realize how unhappy I am due to this incident.”

“I was still able to feel the difference between my normal lived-being and how I felt in the experience that I was going through then. I think that I could clearly feel the difference. In the beginning my focus is on that lady didn’t communicate with me. And then after a while, a few hours you begin realize how it is burdensome, how much suffering, how much heaviness, and how uncomfortable you are. Attention is most certainly shifting to myself. And then when I realize that this is uncomfortable, the changes in the body, the changes in the brain, the changes in the heartbeat...everything.”

“I started to watch my mind and body and realized that I am suffering a lot. When I become aware of these disturbing mental and bodily states, I thought to myself that this is not good for me.”

“I decided to bring my practice of Loving-Kindness to deal with this situation.”

Jane

“The judgments on others are more hurtful to me than they are to someone else.”

“The time came when I knew it was time to say a Loving-Kindness meditation for my friend.”

9. **Ongoing Practice of LKM: Their practice of LKM has been long-term and continuous. Going into these angering encounters, participants had been practicing for many months, both on and off the cushion. They generally practiced by repeating phrases of Loving-Kindness for themselves and for others. Changes that occurred due to the practice were gradual. When they decided to practice LKM in response to a particular angering encounter, it took some time for their feelings towards the other to change. They either practiced LKM formally on the cushion in the absence of the other after the angering encounter, or repeated phrases of**

**Loving-Kindness in the presence of the angering other inside the angering situation.
Participants directed their practice towards themselves and towards others.**

Arvind

“Actually because I was thinking I need to go there. I need to buy a ticket and go right away there and talk her. Then I thought, “Why I am doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her?” If I do that, I will do something wrong, really wrong. I will hit her, I’ll do something bad and is that ok? It’s not good. So I postponed buying ticket and then I thought: ‘No I don’t want to.’ It is a long process of thinking and struggling in my mind.”

“Finally I told this is not the way. If she wants give it to me, she will give, but I do not want to harbor hatred in my mind and pollute my mind. I started to practice Loving-Kindness for myself and for her.”

Mary

“The last time though I started thinking that I don’t know their story. [There’s change. You were annoyed and aggravated. You didn’t want to talk to them when you were having tea. But then all of a sudden you’re saying: ‘The last time I started thinking that I don’t know their story.’ So it seems like there’s a shift there. What do you imagine caused that shift?] I know that coming here shifted me completely. I’m different. I’m not perfect. I still get mad and you know and I have other issues but I think with the Dhamma talks we have after meditation and the stories they tell.”

“I found myself feeling bad for this person and sending them Loving-Kindness vibrations during meditation.”

Rahul

“It was difficult in the beginning. [Can you say something about the difficulty in the beginning?] It’s really difficult in the beginning because your mind is again drawn to the angry thoughts because you realize that she hasn’t done a good thing. So you try to bring Loving-Kindness, and your mind is pulling you: she hasn’t done well, so she has done a mistake. So kind of you know taking of the mind back to angry thoughts.”

“I felt good about myself. Then I was trying to think some goodness in this lady. So only after I make myself peaceful did I find some goodness in this process and then only I actually direct my thoughts to her, and find some goodness, whether she has demonstrated any goodness in that interaction.”

“I tried to imagine myself as her. So this is what we do in Loving-Kindness meditation, we try to put ourselves in other person’s shoes.”

Jane

“It took some more months of doing this before things started to change. It started with my attitude of recognizing that I was judging when my friend spoke. I was aware but I just told those thoughts that I did not want to judge another person anymore and that they could move on. I felt less closed in. Fewer times that I found myself with arms crossed in from me so as to be in big control. I was still able to monitor my thoughts and be aware of my breathing and the ability to relax.”

- 10. Expanding Awareness of Self and Other: With ongoing practice and focus, participants’ horizon of understanding concerning the angering encounter began to expand as they gained a broader awareness of the context of the incident and the relevant circumstances. They began to recognize the vulnerability and limitations of both parties, the denial of which had compelled them to become angry in the first place. This newly acquired understanding of their contribution to the situation opened up the space for understanding their own vulnerabilities and limitations. They began to realize that they had been exaggerating the power of the perceived offender other and/or exaggerating the effect that the offense has had on them.**

Arvind

“Then I thought: ok, I have lost not only this money I have lost so many things in my life. Why I am worried about only this particular situation?”

“One thing...she is spend all the money. I had to understand that anyhow it has gone.”

“I thought ‘Why I am doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her?’ If I do that, I will do something wrong really wrong. I will hit her, I’ll do something bad and is that ok? It’s not good.”

Mary

“The last time though I started thinking that I don’t know their story. What if they have a problem? I started thinking that maybe there’s a good reason? Maybe they had a back condition?”

“Maybe it took everything they could do in their power to just get there then, maybe even after a hard day’s of work that made them late. And maybe they have back problems and they can’t sit still!”

“The same for driving. I was such an angry driver, so impatient. I’m trying to think of the other person. Maybe they’re hurt or afraid or whatever that’s causing them to be really slow or cut you off, or whatever they do wrong.”

Kerri

“So I know that his anger and issues are just symptoms of much deeper pain and suffering, so I thought if I just kept only sending him love and kindness it would defuse the situation. His family has a history. His parents were divorced and his

mom married a man who was not the best man in the world. Then he was raised by his grandparents at some point. Currently he's a self-employed builder so the economy is having an impact on him. He had a brother pass away a couple of years ago. So there are issues in his life that are causing him to suffer. And it's spilling over onto everything else."

Rahul

"Then a thought arose in me that I have not wasted anything. So now I try to find some goodness in this whole thing, because now I feel that my time is wasted so I felt everything is negative, but when my mind is clear I should find some goodness in this whole process. So then I realized that I have produced an article. So it has not been accepted to publish, but article is with me. I have produced something. So I felt that I have not wasted anything. Though my article would not be published in this magazine, I learned a lot in the process of writing. I had more clear idea about that subject, more than before. So in that very process of writing, actually I learn a lot too. It is with me, I have not wasted time, and even maybe I could give article to someone else."

"In that case, she cannot be fully responsible for the decision made by the editing committee. Though she could have been better in communicating with me, I realized that she did not do any harm to me purposely. Then I started to feel sympathy for her. So I felt that in the beginning, I put my all anger to her, but now I realize that she is playing a different role, and she has no power. She is not responsible for the decision made by the committee. The only thing that she has done was that she was delayed in communicating with me. So now her fault is more lenient than earlier because now I realize that she hasn't done kind of severe mistake as I imagined earlier."

"And also my whole problem was that I spending the whole night writing article. It is not her fault too. It is my decision to spend all night. She didn't ask me to spend whole night writing this."

"In the beginning I was projecting everything to her, but now I begin to see more detail. We can see different conditions create this situation, and not any one person is responsible for the whole thing."

Jane

"It felt like a great relief. I didn't have to be perfect and I would continue to make mistakes, some more costly than those listed above. I think that's really important that when we focus on our mistakes, that's where we are living well, that's where we're focusing."

"I could also decide that if someone viewed me as a "lowest piece of humanity" that it didn't have to apply to me unless I allowed it to."

“...[I was] not realizing how [my judgments] affected me in a negative way and how knowing that to be aware of them and to let them pass by. So the judgments on others are more hurtful to me than they are to someone else.”

“This has been difficult to write as I realized how much I was influenced by my anger toward my friend and had never realized I could do anything about it.”

11. Recognizing the Consequences of One’s Actions: Furthermore, they developed the understanding that by becoming angry, they were provoking a negative reaction from the other that served only to alienate both parties.

Arvind

“I don’t want to involve to their trend to pollute myself.”

“I just do something totally different that is I am thinking about may you be able to gain the wisdom.”

Mary

“Well...because um I think it just made me feel more aware no matter how I feel about the other person we’re connected.”

“If I’m thinking negatively towards them, then it’s only gonna come back and affect me.”

Kerri

“I was able to be over here watching his anger, and kind of understanding where he was coming from, but at the same time not participating in it. “

“The only choice I had before was to be defensive and reactive and emotional and that’s all I knew. But now I know something else that separates me from that.”

“I think he was affected by my non-participation.”

“I just think normally when you’re confronting somebody, or when someone is confronting you, your anger doesn’t give them anywhere else to go.”

Rahul

“And also, my whole problem was that I spending the whole night writing article. It is not her fault too, it is my decision to spend all night (chuckle). She didn’t ask me to spend whole night writing this (laughs).”

“I felt that such a good thing that I didn’t reply her and I also felt bad that that I felt angry about her in the beginning.”

Jane

“Oh what a relief for this awareness! It made me take a real look at myself and how I had contributed to our strained relationship and my anger with her. [Can you expand on the sense of relief a little bit?] I felt relaxed. I felt like my body was more relaxed. I wasn’t sitting like this at the meetings (shows tense posture) which, you know, is good control when you can put your arms in front of you.”

“In the next weeks some real insights about myself came forward. I was becoming aware of how much I was judging her in her descriptions of people in her life, and perhaps me as well, realizing that I was doing the same things in my thinking as she was doing, only in a different way.”

- 12. The Other Becomes Richer and More Complex: What participants originally perceived as a personal affront became less threatening and less personal. Their focus on blaming others for causing their suffering began to ease as they became more aware of contextual factors that were affecting both parties beyond the narrow scope of the original angering encounters. Now they saw others as vulnerable and suffering human beings who were (and are) influenced and constrained by psychological motivations and material circumstances. The angering other may have made a mistake, but he or she does not deserve to be demonized. Participants reached a sense of finality and closure once they realized that others are capable of good as well as bad, just as they themselves are capable of good and bad. Both parties are finite and vulnerable human beings who want to be loved, accepted, and respected, and both are susceptible to suffering, vulnerability, and imperfection.**

Arvind

“Actually when I am sending the Loving-Kindness I felt I visualized that she become so nice and having a beautiful smile and her face and she’s trying really hard...trying to solve the problem not to escape from the problem. That’s what I felt. I felt so happy...oh it’s nice...why I am do something bad? I felt that happiness in my mind too.”

“[So in a way your image of her changed when you practiced?] Yes, in practice her image also change.”

Kerri

“So I know that his anger and issues are just symptoms of much deeper pain and suffering, so I thought if I just kept only sending him love and kindness it would defuse the situation. [Let me ask you about this. “I know that his anger and issues are just a symptom of a much deeper pain and suffering.” Could you say more?]. Well I know his family has a history. His parents were divorced; his mom married a man who was not the best man in the world. Then he was raised by his grandparents at some point. Currently he’s a self-employed builder so the economy is having an impact on him. He had a brother pass away a couple of

years ago. So there are issues in his life that are causing him to suffer. And it's spilling over onto everything else."

"Practicing Loving-Kindness just gave me the space I needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain. The situation was able to continue until he was able to look at the situation through better eyes."

"I just think normally when you're confronting somebody, or when someone is confronting you, your anger doesn't give them anywhere else to go."

Rahul

"In that case, she cannot be fully responsible for the decision made by the editing committee. Though she could have been better in communicating with me, I realized that she did not do any harm to me purposely. Then I started to feel sympathy for her. So I felt that in the beginning, I put my all anger to her, but now I realize that she is playing a different role, and she has no power. She is not responsible for the decision made by the committee; she didn't make that decision. The only thing that she has done was that she was delayed in communicating with me. So now her fault is more lenient than earlier because now I realize that she hasn't done same kind of severe mistake as I imagine earlier."

"She replied me with a lot of regret and confessed that she was suffering from migraine and could not work for two days. That is why she could not send me an email informing the change of plan of the committee before I submitted my article. [What was it like for you to hear that she had a migraine for two days?] My sympathy grow further and further and I thought that how good that I didn't reply her when I was angry. I felt that such a good thing that I didn't reply her and I also felt bad that that I felt angry about her in the beginning, but I am also ok because I later slowly managed to reduce it. Now I begin to see in a more details in this picture. The reason she didn't reply to my email that I sent just before I start writing was that she was not working."

Jane

"In the next weeks some real insights about myself came forward. I was becoming aware of how much I was judging her in her descriptions of people in her life, and perhaps me as well, realizing that I was doing the same things in my thinking as she was doing, only in a different way."

- 13. Embracing Vulnerability and Creating Empathy: The participants' capacity for seeing vulnerability was strengthened not only for others, but for themselves as well. Upon this recognition of mutual finitude, participants felt relieved, regretful, embarrassed, or enlightened—but in all cases empowered. Passive protests gave way to active reevaluation and reorientation. When participants had future meetings with the angering others, they felt more comfortable and less threatened—**

perhaps even having a pleasant encounter and developing the intention to deepen their understanding of the once angering other.

Arvind

“But now I’m actually I feel two things. One, if she has used that money for their beneficial, I’m happy. If she’s used that money for gambling or something in ruin their life, I feel so sad.”

“She call me and promised that I’ll try my best to give back your money. Few days after she call and she text me and say I am in this situation and I am so sorry I’ll try my best [to pay you back].”

Mary

“I found myself feeling bad for this person and sending them Loving-Kindness vibrations during meditation. And I was able to meditate alongside them even with their distractions. [So you were able to meditate next to this person in a different...] Ya in a whole different...like it didn’t bother me that they were moving. I almost didn’t even notice that they were moving.”

“Then I started feeling bad. And then they haven’t been back since. Every week I’m wondering I say I’ll see if they show up and how I’ll deal with it. I actually want to approach them and just talk to them and be like hey!”

Kerri

“Practicing Loving-Kindness just gave me the space I needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain, the situation was able to continue until he was able to look at the situation through better eyes.”

“The situation was no longer about me and how I how and how bad I make him angry, but it was then about the actual topic that started the conversation in the first place. [It sounds as if using Loving-Kindness in this situation help contain his anger] I just think normally when you’re confronting somebody, or when someone is confronting you, your anger doesn’t give them anywhere else to go, but to continue being angry. So for me if felt like if I’m upset, he’s just gonna stay upset. Unless I reflect I reflect something better back at him it just doesn’t change. [So you’re kind of breaking the cycle?] Yes.”

Rahul

“My sympathy grow further and further and I thought that how good...how good that I didn’t reply her when I was angry. So I felt that you know that such a good thing that I didn’t reply her and I also felt bad that I felt angry about her in the beginning, but I am also ok because I later slowly managed to reduce it.”

Jane

“I felt more relaxed and light like I was not carrying around a bag of bricks on my shoulders.”

4.5 General Structural Description of the Influence of LKM on Everyday Experiences of Being Angry

The General Structure presented below is an uninterrupted narrative combining the General Themes. It explicates the themes common to all situated structures in a generalized, impersonal manner. The goal is to present the reader with the most condensed and coherent form of the results. It deviates slightly from the listed themes above for presentation purposes.

The Participants’ stories begin within the context of each of their life-worlds. As they moved through the world towards their projects, they created expectations and beliefs about themselves. They believed that they were on the right path to being good people who are competent in their respective social roles as monks, students, wives, mothers, or friends. Participants saw themselves as generous, focused, esteemed, altruistic, independent, striving to be connected, and generally worthy of dignity and respect.

Similarly, they grew accustomed to relating to others in certain ways and expected that others would not deviate from these expectations. Consequently, participants reacted to others’ actions in a way consistent with such expectations. Depending on their current dispositions towards others, others were painted in a positive or a negative light. Others were seen as trustworthy and competent, or conversely as disruptive, verbally abusive, or judgmental. When participants had highly ambivalent relationships with others, they expected others to do something upsetting. In the case of good relationships, participants expected others not to get in their way of being good people themselves. They carried on with the assumption that others are unlikely to act in a manner that is contrary to their

preconceptions. A “good” person is expected to do good things, and a “bad” person is expected to do bad things.

If participants expected others to offend, then they approached the angering encounter with a constrained and defensive disposition; they were already on their way to becoming angry. Conversely, if they expected others to do the right thing, but these others acted contrary to their expectations, then participants experienced disruption and confusion before becoming angry. In the case of feeling disrupted and confused by others who acted contrary to participants’ expectations of being good, participants tried to recover their original understanding of the other, e.g., by giving the other the benefit of the doubt, or by trying to convince the other to correct his or her ways in accordance with the participant’s original expectations. Alternatively, if they were expecting others to behave badly, then they approached the encounter with the sense of “here we go again,” which is a sense of futility and inevitably continuing frustration. Either way, participants felt that the other *should* treat them well, i.e., not block their projects or violate their expectations of themselves or of others. Participants then became angry and felt slighted and disrupted by others’ behaviors, and defended themselves against the slight of others through a variety of active or passive (but ultimately goal-undermining) methods that include fantasies of revenge, avoidance, lashing out, and self-righteous condemnation.

They overtly or covertly directed objection, blame, and protest towards others who were characterized with all sorts of negative attributions: as arrogant betrayers, as maliciously disrespectful, as verbally abusive, as negligent and irresponsible, or as judgmental and self-righteous. Such attributions arose during the offending incident or may have been longstanding judgments, depending on each participant’s disposition

towards the angering other as the participant went into the encounter. Participants may have seen others as continuing to be bad or as individuals who were once good but have now become bad. In all cases, participants *focused* on and ruminated about the angering other's (real or perceived) purposeful and malicious actions, and thereby lost sight of any personal culpability. As they became angrier and angrier, their perspective on the situation became increasingly myopic and strained. This kind of tunnel-vision was counter-productive because it posited the participant as a disempowered victim when that was not necessarily the case.

Over time however, participants grew exhausted of straining themselves in the process of blaming the other. There came a point when they realized that continuing their current course of being agitated and frustrated is uncomfortable and unpleasant, and that life would be better if they could find a way to diffuse ongoing feelings of frustration and blame. This realization of wanting relief from frustration confronted them with the question: "how do I do things differently?" Faced with this choice, they decide to cultivate the practice Loving-Kindness.

Their practice of LKM has been long-term and continuous. Going into these angering encounters, participants had been practicing for many months, both on and off the cushion. They generally practiced by repeating phrases of Loving-Kindness for themselves and for others. Changes that occurred due to the practice were gradual. When they decided to practice LKM in response to a particular angering encounter, it took some time for their feelings towards the other to change. They either practiced LKM formally on the cushion after the fact or repeated phrases of Loving-Kindness in the presence of the

angering other inside the situation. They directed their practice towards both themselves and towards others.

With ongoing practice and focus, their horizon of understanding concerning the angering encounter began to expand as they gained a broader awareness of the context of the incident and the relevant circumstances. They began to recognize the vulnerability and limitations of both parties, the denial of which had compelled them to become angry in the first place. This newly acquired understanding of their contribution to the situation opened up the space for understanding their own vulnerabilities and limited powers. They began to realize that they had been exaggerating the power of the offending other and/or exaggerating the effect that the offense has had on them. Furthermore, they developed the understanding that by becoming angry, they provoked a negative reaction from the other that serves only to alienate both parties.

What participants originally perceived as a personal affront became less threatening and less personal. Their focus on blaming others for causing their suffering began to ease as they became more aware of contextual factors that were affecting both parties *beyond the narrow scope of the original angering encounters*. Now they saw others as vulnerable and suffering human beings who were (and are) influenced and constrained by psychological motivations and material circumstances. The angering other may have made a mistake, but he or she does not deserve to be demonized. Participants reached a sense of finality and closure once they realized that the angering others is capable of good as well as bad, just as participants themselves are capable of good and bad. Both parties are finite and vulnerable human beings who want to be loved, accepted, and respected, and both are susceptible to suffering, vulnerability, and imperfection.

The participants' capacity for seeing vulnerability was strengthened not only for others, but for themselves as well. Upon this recognition of mutual finitude, participants felt relieved, regretful, embarrassed, or enlightened—but in all cases empowered. Passive protests gave way to active reevaluation and reorientation. When participants had future meetings the angering others, they felt more comfortable and less threatened—perhaps even having a pleasant encounter and developing the intention to deepen their understanding of the once angering other.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The following Discussion section will be divided into five sub-sections. The first section addresses reflexivity. The second section discusses the results of this study in light of the Literature Review. The third section addresses the clinical implications of this study. The fourth section addresses this study's contributions and limitations. The fifth section examines this study's implications and suggests possibilities for future research.

5.1 Reflexivity

One danger of any research method, and especially with descriptive methods, is for the researcher to focus on aspects of the results that conform to his preconceptions and expectations, and to ignore evidence that stands against his assumptions—hence the importance of reflexivity. Overall, I found that the results elaborated, differentiated, and explicated my original assumptions to a degree. For example, I anticipated that wishing oneself happiness and well-being would promote self-compassion. Such a prediction seemed intuitive and obvious (one could hardly imagine that wishing oneself well would compel self-loathing). However, the results showed what self-compassion looks like, i.e., embracing vulnerability, allowing oneself to be affected, accepting suffering, and forgiving oneself and others for imperfections. In other instances, the results completely surprised me and revealed themes that I never anticipated. Therefore my revised method of accomplishing reflexivity (as compared to the proposal) is based not only on *comparing* my assumptions with the results but more broadly on reevaluating my assumptions in light of the results. What I ultimately hope to demonstrate below is that the results went beyond my preconceptions, and that I was genuinely *surprised, illuminated, and informed* by them.

After formulating the results, something surprising happened; I realized that the results themselves were the most fruitful source of my preconceptions. Certain preconceptions that I was not aware of before formulating the results came to mind only because of how they contrasted with the results. In other words, many of my assumptions were determined only in retrospect because of how they differed from the actual results. Such assumptions are labeled implicit assumptions. Assumptions that were explicitly accessible to my awareness before I commenced data collection are labeled as explicit assumptions. The explicit assumptions generally came from my personal experiences with LKM and from the research I conducted for the Literature Review.

To clarify how I will accomplish the task of reflexivity below, I will list each General Theme and then spell out how each of them relates to my assumptions, identifying each assumption as either explicit or implicit. Some General Themes are followed by a discussion of an implicit assumption or an explicit assumption, while others are followed by a discussion of both.

1 - Habitual Expectations of Self: The Participants' stories began within the context of their respective life-worlds. As they moved through the world towards their projects, they created expectations and beliefs about themselves. They believed that they are on the right path to being good people who are competent in their respective social roles as monks, students, wives, mothers, or friends. Participants saw themselves as generous, focused, esteemed, altruistic, independent, striving to be connected, and generally worthy of dignity and respect.

Implicit Assumption: Concerning the contexts within which participants became angry, I expected that they would become angry within a variety of contexts, be they related to interpersonal relationships, physical illness, poverty and the like.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: I was surprised to see that all of the angering incidents occurred within relational contexts. Because of this study's small sample size of five, this fact may be accidental, but I cannot help but reflect on the possibility that people are most likely to

become angry within the context of interpersonal relationships. Drawing from personal and clinical experience, I suspect that interpersonal difficulties are often powerful catalysts for intense experiences of anger. However, I can just as easily imagine people who become angered by poverty or chronic illness. Illness and poverty can in turn exacerbate interpersonal problems. Mary, for example, was constantly on edge during a period when she experienced intense migraines and back pain. The safest assumption to make is that various material and interpersonal factors contribute to becoming angry, but that interpersonal conflicts are particularly liable to bring about angry reactions, or at least be the stage upon which such feelings are acted out.

Explicit Assumption: The theories of anger addressed in the Literature Review unanimously emphasized the importance of disrupted expectations to the process of becoming angry. When people are emotionally invested in seeing themselves (and being seen by others) in a certain way, they tend to feel threatened when these images are invalidated and undermined.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: The results confirmed the power of expectations but more importantly revealed what expectations look like in everyday experiences. The research found that participants' expectations are related to their *social roles*, and to the extent participants saw themselves as meeting or failing to meet the expectations of their specific role. For example, as a Buddhist monk, Rahul expected himself to be knowledgeable in Buddhist teachings. When his article was rejected, one reason he became angry is that this expectation of himself as a knowledgeable Buddhist scholar was invalidated. Similarly, as someone who wants to be a good mother, Kerri expected herself to be able to maintain some harmony within the family and to be able to protect her children. When her husband accused her of disrupting the family or when she perceived herself as unable protect her children from the fighting between herself and her

husband, she became angry in part because she could not meet these expectations. Moreover, just as participants expected themselves to be competent in their own roles, they expected others to be competent in theirs such that each side validates and mirrors the other. For example, as a monk who aspires to be altruistic and wise, Arvind expected his friend to be grateful for his generosity and to take his advice seriously. However, when Arvind's friend showed ingratitude for his generosity and completely ignored his advice, Arvind became angry. Generally speaking, there is a powerful symmetry between participants' expectations of themselves and their expectations of others. When others validate our social roles, they complement us and we perceive them as good and trustworthy. When others invalidate our roles, we perceive them as being bad, i.e., as incompetent in their social roles, and we become angry when we perceive that they are causing us to be bad in our own roles.

2 - Habitual Expectations of Others: Similarly, participants grew accustomed to relating to others in certain ways and expected that others would not deviate from these expectations. Consequently, participants reacted to others' actions in a way consistent with such expectations. Depending on their current dispositions towards others, others were painted in a positive or a negative light. Others were seen as trustworthy and competent, or conversely as disruptive, verbally abusive, or judgmental. When participants had highly ambivalent relationships with others, they expected others to do something upsetting. In the case of good relationships, participants expected others not to get in the way. Participants carried on with the assumption that others are unlikely to act in a manner that is contrary to one's preconceptions. A "good" person is expected to do good things, and a "bad" person is expected to do bad things.

Implicit Assumption: I had a sense before completing the study that people held ongoing judgments of others in their minds, and that these judgments were powerful in terms of their effects on relationships.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: What surprised me is how powerful, yet quite subtle and implicit these expectations can be. An unexpected connection revealed itself between expectation and judgment; expectations are ongoing judgments. Arvind for example seemed to lose recognition of his friend when she didn't meet his expectations in terms of how she handled

his money. Jane also seemed to barely recognize her friend from the women's group until they reconciled.

Explicit Assumption: I intuitively expected that past experiences with others surely shape our future experiences.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This assumption is confirmed by the study. What the study brought to light is that surprises have a powerful effect on how past and present experiences of the other are related. The results suggest that the other, as opposed to our mental image of the other, seem to coincide until the other surprises us. Disruption might be an essential element in defining and recognizing otherness. Unexpected disruptions in the relationship can retrospectively color what we thought of as "good." For example, Arvind realized that his friend was never trustworthy to begin with, only that he had falsely assumed her to be so.

3 - Assumptions about the Specific Person Who Angered them Before the Encounter: If participants expected others to offend, then they approach the angering encounter with a constrained and defensive disposition; they were already on their way to becoming angry. Conversely, if they expected others to do the right thing, but these others acted contrary to their expectations, then participants experienced surprised and confusion before becoming angry. In the case of feeling confused by others who acted contrary to their expectations of being good, they tried to recover their original understanding of the other, e.g., by giving the other the benefit of the doubt, or by trying to convince the other to correct his or her ways in accordance with the participant's original expectations. Alternatively, if they were expecting others to behave badly, then they approached the encounter with the sense of "here we go again," which is a sense of futility and inevitably continuing frustration.

Implicit Assumption: Before completing the study, I had not considered the consequences of being inflexible in terms of our judgments of others.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: It seems to be the case that people habitually hold on to their judgments of others in order to minimize the ambiguity of relating to them. Relating to someone via a relatively fixed judgment creates a sense of safety at the cost of a lower tolerance for ambiguity and surprises. The stronger the judgment is, the less we can tolerate behaviors that

contradict this judgment. Furthermore, if we carry a sense of futility that the other is not going to change, then we enter the encounter already half-angry and enact a self-fulfilling prophecy.

4 - A Sense of Being Wronged: Participants were angered for various reasons, but all felt wronged. Once angered, participants felt that the other should treat them well, i.e., not block their projects or violate their expectations of themselves or of others.

Explicit Assumption: I agreed with the literature review's emphasis on the importance of being blocked, and feeling that an injustice was committed to the process of becoming angry.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This assumption is confirmed by the study. What this study adds is that the sense of being wronged is at the heart of feeling blocked and feeling that an injustice has been committed. There is a kind of insistence on the part of the angry person that reality conform to expectations, and that what is wrong should have never happened.

5 - Protest: Participants became angry and felt slighted and disrupted by others' behaviors, and defended themselves against the slight of others through a variety of active or passive (but ultimately goal-undermining) methods that included avoidance, lashing out, self-righteous condemnation, and fantasies of revenge

Implicit Assumption: When the results showed how each participant became angry in her or his own unique way, I realized that I had been assuming that the process leading up to becoming angry would be relatively uniform across participants. More specifically, I imagined that participants would become angry immediately or shortly after the angering event (time), that that they would be aware that they were angry (consciousness), and that they would become angry while being in the same place as the angering other (proximity).

Evaluation in Light of the Results: My assumptions about the temporal, spatial, and conscious properties of becoming angry turned out to be too simplistic and naïve. The process leading up to the point where different participants identified with being angry (or considered themselves angry) differed dramatically between participants. For example, Arvind started to doubt his friend's intentions once she started making excuses as to why she could not pay him back. He

spent a considerable amount of time trying to convince her to invest the money he gave her in a way he deemed appropriate. His frustration was *gradually* building over time as she continued to make excuses. Once he understood that she had no intention to return his money, his frustration gave way to outright rage. Conversely, Rahul remained calm, optimistic, and continued to give the journal organizer the benefit of the doubt. Once she informed him that the journal no longer needed his article, he was *suddenly* and unexpectedly angry. Mary was initially irritated by the other meditation student's behavior, but ruminating on his or her behavior in his or her *absence* dramatically intensified Mary's sense of irritation until she could no longer focus on meditation in this person's presence. Mary's "base line" was irritation, which escalated to anger because she kept dwelling on the other meditation student's behavior. Jane was *not conscious* of the fact that she was angry with her friend until after she acted out (when she sided with one friend against the other during the Ohio vacation). She was only retrospectively able to determine that she was angry. Although there were many commonalities between participants, each participant became angry in his or her own unique way.

6 - Blaming the Angering Other: Participants overtly or covertly directed objection, blame, and protest towards the angering others who were characterized with all sorts of negative attributions: as arrogant betrayers, as maliciously disrespectful, as verbally abusive, as negligent and irresponsible, or as judgmental and self-righteous. Such attributions arose during the offending incident or may have been longstanding judgments, depending on each participant's disposition towards the angering other as the participant went into the encounter. Participants may have seen others as continuing to be bad or as individuals who were once good but have now become bad.

Explicit Assumption: Both the phenomenological and Buddhist accounts of becoming angry strongly emphasized the importance of blame to the process of becoming angry, and I agreed with this assumption.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This study strongly confirmed this observation. What this study adds is that labels and judgments typically accompany blame. The angering other is

typically given unflattering labels that indicate flawed character, ill will, and even malevolence. Furthermore, the blaming person excludes himself or herself from the negative judgment. If the other is self-righteous, then that means that the angry person is humble and open-minded. If the other is negligent, then the angry person is conscientious, and so on.

7 - Rumination: In all cases, participants focused on and ruminated about the angering other's (real or perceived) purposeful and malicious actions, and thereby lost sight of any personal culpability. As they became angrier and angrier, their perspective on the situation became increasingly myopic and strained. This kind of tunnel vision was counter-productive because it posited the participant as a disempowered victim, even when that was not necessarily the case.

Implicit Assumption: Before formulating my results, I had not considered that there might be a strong connection between anger and rumination.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: The most surprising of all my findings was that without exception, every participant *ruminated* about the wrongdoings of the angering other. Participants found themselves dwelling on the angering other's perceived wrongdoing and blamed him or her for causing their suffering and misfortune. Arvind was enraged for months when he realized that his money was gone—to the point where he described his life as unbearable. Mary would anticipate seeing the other meditation student before class and would be irritated even before she saw him or her. Kerri was generally consumed by the whole divorce process and faulted her husband for making the process more difficult than it needed to be. Rahul dwelled on the organizer's failure to communicate for some time before he decided to practice LKM. Similarly, after the vacation incident where she sided against her friend, Jane dreaded and avoided the group for months. As we shall see below, such ruminative states are crucial because they create enough discomfort to compel participants to seek comfort and solace in LKM. Feeling stuck in a state of unpleasant rumination was the primary factor that compelled participants to practice LKM.

Explicit Assumption: One of the predictions made based on the Literature Review was that participants would become angry in order to remove the obstacles to their goals, but that participants' anger would ironically undermined their ability to pursue their goals.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This idea is confirmed by the study. It is ironic that becoming angry—an act that is supposed to remove the obstacles to one's projects—becomes an obstacle in itself. Ruminating on the faults of others and blaming others served only to position participants as disempowered victims and to discourage them from actively reevaluating their options and asserting themselves. In other words, participants were creating the very conditions that they have been accusing the angering other of creating; they were unwittingly creating obstacles for themselves. For example, Arvind was violating his own values as a Buddhist by hating his friend. He also blinded himself to the possibility of alternative ways of making money instead of waiting for his friend to return his money. Similarly, Mary lost focus during meditation and felt aggravated by her fellow practitioner who disrupted her ability to be a good student, thus losing sight of the fact that being a good student of LKM means finding a way to tolerate her fellow students' imperfections. In the process of blaming the journal organizer, Rahul lost sight of the fact that he could publish his article elsewhere, and also of how rewarding and enjoyable the process of writing the article had been. Likewise, Jane's efforts to connect with others in the aftermath of her husband's passing were hindered by focusing on her friend's judgmental tendencies.

8 - Recognizing Suffering in Self: Over time however, participants grew exhausted of straining themselves in the process of blaming the other. There came a point when they realized that continuing their current course of being agitated and frustrated was uncomfortable and unpleasant, and that life would be better if they could find a way to diffuse ongoing feelings of frustration and blame. This realization of wanting relief from frustration confronted them with the question: "how do I do things differently?" Faced with this choice, they decided to cultivate the practice Loving-Kindness.

Implicit Assumption: Concerning a given participant's decision to practice LKM, I originally imagined that he or she would chose to practice LKM out of principle. Specifically, I imagined that participants would think: "I am angry at someone, but being angry is bad, so I should practice LKM."

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This assumption turned out to be wrong on all accounts.

What compelled the participants to practice LKM, including the monks, was an experience of psychological exhaustion. Ruminating on the angering other's wrongdoing and blaming him or her continually took an emotional toll and created an experience of being stuck that drove participants to try and find a way out. The decision to practice came primarily out of compassion for oneself and not out of obeying moral principles. For example, Arvind grew tired of the revenge fantasies that consumed him. Mary wanted to be able to concentrate again during meditation. Kerri was sick of the fruitless arguments with her husband. Rahul wanted to relieve his physical discomfort. Jane wanted to reconnect with her friend and feel comfortable attending the women's group again. She and other participants decided to practice LKM in order to gain freedom from rumination and to continue pursuing their projects in a skillful and non self-undermining manner.

9 - Ongoing Practice of LKM: Their practice of LKM has been long-term and continuous. Going into these angering encounters, participants had been practicing for many months, both on and off the cushion. They generally practiced by repeating phrases of Loving-Kindness for themselves and for others. Changes that occurred due to the practice were gradual. When they decided to practice LKM in response to a particular angering encounter, it took some time for their feelings towards the other to change. They either practiced LKM formally on the cushion in the absence of the other after the angering encounter, or repeated phrases of Loving-Kindness in the presence of the angering other inside the angering situation. Participants directed their practice towards themselves and towards others.

Implicit Assumption: Another naïve prejudgment of mine was that participants would feel angry, practice LKM a few times, and then overcome their anger.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: To the contrary, participants had to practice for some time and work through various aspects of the angering incident before being able to let go of being angry. For example, Arvind prematurely thought that he had forgiven his friend after initial practice. When his revenge fantasies returned, he realized that he had to continue to practice in order to work through his feelings. Similarly, Rahul emphasized that his mind continually pulled him back to the journal organizer's mistakes. Jane had to practice for months and learn to forgive her own faults before she could forgive those of her friend.

10 - Expanding Awareness of Self and Other: With ongoing practice and focus, participants' horizon of understanding concerning the angering encounter began to expand as they gained a broader awareness of the context of the incident and the relevant circumstances. They began to recognize the vulnerability and limitations of both parties, the denial of which had compelled them to become angry in the first place. This newly acquired understanding of their contribution to the situation opened up the space for understanding their own vulnerabilities and limitations. They began to realize that they had been exaggerating the power of the perceived offender other and/or exaggerating the effect that the offense has had on them

Explicit Assumption: From my personal experience with practicing LKM, I have noticed that my awareness of myself and of others expanded after practice.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This study confirmed the idea that practicing LKM expands awareness of self and other. What this study also revealed was how LKM creates this effect. When participants opened themselves to their own vulnerability, they simultaneously found it in the angering other. The victim/perpetrator dyad disintegrated and participants realized that they were giving the other too much power and giving themselves too little power. They were also giving themselves power in areas where they had no power, and taking it away in areas where they actually had it.

11 - Recognizing the Consequences of One's Actions: Furthermore, they developed the understanding that by becoming angry, they were provoking a negative reaction from the other that served only to alienate both parties.

Explicit assumption: Drawing on my own practice I imagined that LKM would help participants understand that “it takes two to tango” and that positioning oneself as a “pure victim” only serves to exacerbate conflict.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: This assumption has been confirmed by the results. What the results added is the mechanism of how remaining angry exacerbates conflict. When participants entered an encounter expecting that the other will offend, then the possibility of the other offending actually increased because the other was being approached with anxiety and consternation. Generally speaking, when people are approached with anxiety and suspicion, they are actually more likely to become or remain angry than they are to remain calm or gain composure.

12 - The Other Becomes Richer and More Complex: What participants originally perceived as a personal affront became less threatening and less personal. Their focus on blaming others for causing their suffering began to ease as they became more aware of contextual factors that were affecting both parties beyond the narrow scope of the original angering encounters. Now they newly saw others as vulnerable and suffering human beings who were (and are) influenced and constrained by psychological motivations and material circumstances. The angering other may have made a mistake, but he or she does not deserve to be demonized. Participants reached a sense of finality and closure once they realized that others are capable of good as well as bad, just as they themselves are capable of good and bad. Both parties are finite and vulnerable human beings who want to be loved, accepted, and respected, and both are susceptible to suffering, vulnerability, and imperfection.

Implicit Assumptions: Before completing the results for this study, I had a sense from practicing psychotherapy that deepening our understanding of others rendered their affronts less personal.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: The results confirm this assumption. What they added is the specific importance of realizing and accepting the similarities between self and other. Even though the other angered us, they are still driven by material circumstances and psychological motivations just as we are. We make errors and mistakes just as they do, and we exercise poor judgment just as they do. Understanding the complexity of another human being may require

that we can see that complexity in ourselves first, and then bring that same understanding when dealing with others.

13 - Embracing Vulnerability and Creating Empathy: The participants' capacity for seeing vulnerability was strengthened not only for others, but for themselves as well. Upon this recognition of mutual finitude, participants felt relieved, regretful, embarrassed, or enlightened—but in all cases empowered. Passive protests gave way to active reevaluation and reorientation. When participants had future meetings with the angering others, they felt more comfortable and less threatened—perhaps even having a pleasant encounter and developing the intention to deepen their understanding of the once angering other.

Explicit Assumption: Based on my personal experience and on the Literature Review, I predicted that LKM would be conducive to empathy.

Evaluation in Light of the Results: The study confirmed that LKM helped participants empathize with others who angered them. What surprised me, however, was that the first step of empathizing with others is empathizing with oneself, i.e., recognizing one's own suffering, vulnerability and imperfection. It seems that before participants could effectively empathize with others, they had to come into contact with their own susceptibility to pain and error.

Paradoxically, coming into contact with vulnerability and finitude enabled participants to see their real options in the situation and empowered them to act on their new insights. Another way of articulating this paradoxical idea is that accepting genuine vulnerability opens up the space for genuine power. For example, Arvind had to accept that his money was gone before he could forgive his friend's betrayal. Once he moved on, he was able to seek out alternative sources of income that he could not see while fixated on his friend. Mary had to contemplate her own physical ailments before she could see the possibility that her fellow student's grunts and shuffles were likewise driven by physical ailments. Once she understood this, she was able to regain her ability to focus deeply during meditation. Jane had to recognize her own judgmental

tendencies before she could forgive the same imperfection in her friend. Once she recognized her own judgmental tendencies, she was able to reconnect with her friend.

Reflections on Method

After completing the study, I came to a few insights about how the empirical phenomenological method works, or at least how it worked for me. One illuminating observation was that many Situated Themes in one participant's account appeared only in light of comparison with Situated Themes found in another participant's account. In other words, a Situated Theme that was explicit in one account sometimes turned out to be implicit in another. It was not possible to discern the implicit theme in the second account until it was revealed explicitly in the first.

Another insight about the method had to do with formulating the General Structure. One of the major gaps in the literature was how the empirical phenomenological researcher moves from the Situated Structures to the General Structure. It seemed to be the case with Giorgi (2009) that this leap is an intuitive one that cannot be systematized. Perhaps this claim is justifiable in the case when there are no clearly evident common themes. Fortunately for this study, the common themes emerged quickly, and I was able to generalize the themes in the Situated Structures by noticing that certain thematic questions emerged. These questions appeared in light of the structure of the participants' narratives, and how they unfolded from moment to moment. I cannot deny that I had to make an intuitive leap between the Situated Structures and the questions that guided the General Themes, but this leap seemed considerably more manageable than jumping directly from the Situated Structures to the General Themes without a mediating step.

Creating a balance between fidelity to the participants' verbatim accounts while still presenting them in an interesting and readable fashion was a challenge. When analyzing the participants' accounts and formulating the analysis tables (See Appendix E), I created two transformations for each meaning unit. The first transformation simply restated the meaning unit in a cleaned up third person format. The second transformation deviated from the first transformation in order to reveal the implicit psychological meanings. In moving from the first to the second, I wanted to be faithful to the original verbatim accounts, yet still be elaborative enough to reveal the implicit psychological meanings for each meaning unit. To solve the problem of striking a balance between fidelity to the data and looking for implicit themes, I underlined key phrases from the verbatim meaning unit and placed them as stated in the second transformation. Using these underlined phrases helped me strike this balance.

5.2 Comparison of Findings to Published Literature

This section addresses to what extent the results of the current study match up with or differ from the existing literature on LKM. First, it will compare this study's findings on how anger develops with Buddhist and Phenomenological accounts. Second, it will compare this study's findings on the effects of LKM on being angry with the qualitative and experimental research's findings addressed in the literature review. I have found that the results of this study are largely consistent with the existing body of literature, and that the differences and discrepancies are helpful and informative, especially for the purposes of future research.

5.2.1 Comparing Buddhist and Phenomenological Accounts of Becoming Angry with This Study's Account of Becoming Angry

In the Dalai Lama's account of becoming angry (1997), anger begins as a generalized sense of dissatisfaction. To ameliorate this generalized sense of dissatisfaction, the person who

feels dissatisfied looks for the cause of this dissatisfaction. When this person encounters an obstruction, as is inevitable in life, and if this person deems the obstruction to be acting out of intentionally demeaning malice, then this person will become angry. He or she will then vilify the obstructor and characterize them as “wholly other,” meaning that the obstructor has nothing in common with the angry person. Kerri, Mary, and Jane’s accounts fit well with this model; their path to becoming angry began with a generalized sense of dissatisfaction with life for various reasons that eventually escalated into anger. Conversely, Rahul and Arvind’s accounts did not fit well with the Dalai Lama’s account because they did not describe feeling a generalized sense of dissatisfaction. The last part of the Dalai Lama’s model however, namely the behavior of vilifying the other and discounting their similarities with oneself, was observed across all the participants.

Fischer’s (1998) phenomenological account of becoming angry was most helpful for the purposes of this study. Its nuanced account of how individuals become angry and the decision points that they face as time progresses served as the model by which I formulated the results of the current study. As a consequence, my account of how my participants became angry is similar to Fischer’s. According to Fischer’s account, the first step towards becoming angry is to feel obstructed. The feeling of obstruction usually occurs against a horizon of similar past obstructions. In the face of goal blockage, one tries again to attain one’s goal but realizes that the current approach is not working. A sense of frustration begins to build and one develops a growing sense that there is no way out. If no alternative is perceived, then one looks for the cause of the obstruction. Once the obstructor is identified, its actions are taken as a personal attack on one’s worthiness as a human being, and on one’s ability achieve one’s goals and projects. Virtually all of one’s focus is directed to the perceived obstructor, and as a result, one

loses sight of any personal contribution to one's angry feelings. The obstructer is perceived as intentionally shaming, demeaning, or devaluing. In the face of such perceived maliciousness, one acts out either by openly protesting or by obviously restraining oneself from lashing out. There are two major choice points in Fischer's account: first at the beginning when one perceives no alternatives to attaining one's goals, and second when all of one's focus shifts to the obstructer and therefore one's loses sight of any personal contributions. Both of these choice points turned out to be crucial pivot points in the findings of the current study.

The findings of this study naturally converge with Fischer's study because they used a similar method and virtually identical assumptions. All of the participants in the present study felt obstructed, grew in frustration, saw no alternatives to achieving their goals, directed that frustration towards the perceived cause, felt that the obstructer was acting intentionally and maliciously, felt demeaned or disrespected, directed their mental efforts to blaming and/or judging the angering other, and lost sight of alternative possibilities of action and of personal contributions to their difficulties. I only found two subtle differences between this study and Fischer's accounts. The first is that I identified more than two ways of acting anger out. In her account, one either lashes out directly (e.g., by hitting something or by yelling) or visibly restrains oneself in a way that is obvious to others. My findings present a wider range of possibilities in terms of how anger is acted out. For example, some of my participants experienced being angry in the form of fantasies of revenge, while others experienced it as a sense of disgust with the perceived aggressor. Another difference is that rumination was a universal finding among the participants of the current study. One could argue that Fischer's idea of "the horizon of past obstructions" is similar to the idea of rumination, but my findings suggest that participants' rumination centered on the specific angering incident as opposed to a

general vague horizon of past obstructions. It may be safe to assume that there are a great many ways to express (and suppress) anger, and that rumination can occur with or without a sense of a long-standing history of frustration.

5.2.2 Corcoran's Study on the effects of LKM

In so far as they address anger, the results of Corcoran's (2007) study on LKM clearly match up with the results of the current study, the key difference being that my study went into considerably greater depth concerning anger. Participants in Corcoran's study reported a reduction in the frequency and intensity of their anger. They found themselves becoming angry less often and being less activated by "pet-peeves." They also found it easier to feel under control when they did become angry (p. 158). As is consistent with Corcoran's study, participants in the current study reported becoming angry less frequently and feeling like LKM provided a practical tool for them to defuse conflictual, angering, and frustrating situations.

Another common finding between Corcoran's study (2007) and the present study is that when angry, participants found that LKM helped them switch focus from the angering person or situation to their own suffering. Participants in both studies found this ability to shift focus from the others' wrongdoing to one's own suffering to be empowering. This is the case because they understood that they have far more control over their own reactions than they have control over the behavior of others. They also understood that paradoxically, by changing their own reactions, they were much more likely to influence the behavior of others. Responding to hostility with hostility creates a deadlock, while responding to hostility with self-compassion has the potential of breaking the deadlock and opening up new possibilities.

As with the current study's participants, Corcoran's (2007) participants also found that LKM helped them reduce negative judgments of themselves and of others. Recall that judging,

blaming, and criticizing others was one of the crucial ingredients of becoming angry. Practicing LKM helped Corcoran's participants replace judgment and blame with empathy, and helped broaden their understandings of their varying contexts:

They developed new beliefs that changed their perceptions of others. These beliefs include a faith in other people's good intentions, a universal connection with others, and an understanding that those causing pain and suffering are suffering themselves and are therefore worthy of compassion. (p.158)

LKM practice helped participants in both studies see the possibility that in spite of conflict, others are still capable of benevolence and good intentions. Furthermore, participants in both studies realized that others' well-being is tied in with their own well-being. Unresolved anger causes suffering to the angry participant and also encourages the angering other to react in a defensive and judgmental way. Participants in both studies understood that just as their anger is largely driven by suffering, the anger of others is similarly driven by personal issues and conflicts. Participants understood that just as they needed compassion to help resolve being angry, so others too needed and deserved compassion to help deal with their anger.

Corcoran's (2007) study found that LKM ameliorates feelings of helplessness. Although I did not address the theme of helplessness in my findings, it is easy to see how feelings of helplessness can compel people to anger. For example, Arvind became angry when he realized that his friend was probably not going to repay her debt to him. Arvind found himself in a helpless situation because there was no legal documentation of the loan he gave her. There was nothing he could do to get his money back. Similarly, Rahul could not do anything to get his article published in the journal that he wanted.

5.2.3 Comparing this Study's Findings of the Effects of LKM on Anger with Buddhist Perspectives

Buddhist scholars (Salzberg, 1995; Makransky, 2007) claim that LKM helps people respond to being angry with empathy and compassion towards themselves and towards others. This claim is consistent with the findings of this study. After practicing LKM for him or herself and for the person that angered them, participants were able to see the bigger context that drives their own and the other's behaviors. They were also able to put themselves in others' shoes and were also able to see that others suffer as they do.

Salzburg (2006) asserted that LKM enables practitioners to see that the angering other is not all bad and that they are capable of both good and bad behavior. LKM's propensity to compel people to see the full complexity, richness, and humanity of others is consistent with the results of this study. After practicing LKM, participants in both studies were able to see goodwill in others.

5.2.4 Comparing this Study's Findings on the Effects of LKM with the Experimental Literature

Carson et al. (2005) demonstrated the effects of LKM by conducting an eight-week LKM intervention on patients suffering from chronic lower back pain. Participants engaged in weekly ninety-minute guided LKM sessions. Participants were also encouraged to practice on their own. This study measured a wide variety of psychological stressors. Two clusters of psychological distress emerged as the most alleviated by LKM: the anger/hostility cluster and the fear/phobia/anxiety cluster. This finding is fascinating because it highlights an important relationship that was not addressed in the current study, namely the relationship between fear and anger. It does not take much reflection for one to realize that anger and fear are closely related.

Future qualitative research could address the effects of LKM on experiences of fear, anxiety, and phobia.

Hutcherson et. al. (2008) concluded through their study that LKM increases feelings of social connectedness. This was certainly the case with participants in my study. All participants reported feelings of being more connected not only with the angering other but with people in general. Fredrickson et. al. (2008) found that LKM increased practitioners' general sense of well-being. Participants in the current study reported feeling better about life in general when practicing LKM. Fredrickson et. al. also found that the ongoing practice of LKM helped participants obtain a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. Although the current study did not explicitly ask participants to describe if and how LKM helped them grow and find purpose, these trends are implicit in their accounts. For example, Jane said that LKM helped her realize the importance of accepting her own shortcomings, and that examining and working on her shortcomings is what made her feel truly alive.

5.2.5 The Broader Context of Self-Transformative Practices

LKM exists within a broader context of healing and transformative practices. Integrating different states of mind to create new ones is not a new idea. The findings of this study are echoed in other literature and resonate with other practices. In his book *Mindsight*, Daniel Siegel (2010), talks about how the right hemisphere of the brain is responsible for holistic thinking and for reconciling seemingly contradictory states of mind. Neural circuits in the “right brain” that are capable of integrating emotions can lie dormant from the lack of use (p. 110). People who are disconnected from their emotions may have weakened synaptic connections, and can benefit from neuronal activation in the right hemisphere. Such activation has the potential to stimulate neurogenesis, a process that is defined as the growth of new neurons and new neural

connections. Siegel identifies three main activities that are conducive to neurogenesis and that activate dormant circuits in the right hemisphere: trying new things, focus (concentration), and aerobic exercise. One could argue that LKM brings about experiences of novelty and concentration in an individual struggling with anger. It introduces novelty by inducing a kind and compassionate state of mind amidst a hostile one, and involves focusing and concentrating on phrases, visualizations, and feelings of care and warmth. One could easily see how other activities such as Mindfulness, prayer, hypnosis, yoga, or jogging could have similar neurological effects. LKM should be considered within the wider world of self-transformative practices.

5.3 Implications for Clinical Practice

The results of this study suggest that practicing LKM on an ongoing basis can help people work through being angry. When I set out to do this study, I hoped that the findings would have some practical value for mental health providers. In this section, I will connect the General Themes with Clinical practice. The General Themes could potentially help psychotherapist working with clients who struggle with anger issues.

5.3.1 Expectations of Self

Most people move through the world expecting many things of themselves. Each individual carries around an implicit understanding of his or her social roles, and generally takes them for granted, be they related to race, religion, gender, occupation, family position, or any other identity. Yet most of these expectations remain implicit and unspoken. They are akin to the water surrounding fish, or to the air surrounding humans. We are born and “thrown” into them, and so we tend to (sometimes erroneously) assume that the ways in which they have been defined by us or by others are meaningful and healthy.

When clients perceive that they are failing to meet these expectations, frustration and anger may arise. Clients often present with issues of anger directed at themselves, and such self-directed anger may evolve into self-loathing. Exploring these implicit expectations with clients and helping them become aware of them may empower clients to see that these expectations are at least partially creations of their own minds. Rendering unconscious expectations conscious may foster a sense of agency, and empower clients to choose how they wish to relate to these expectations. LKM helped participants in this study shift their focus from meeting these expectations to caring for themselves, thus reducing the pressure and power of these expectations. Therapists can help clients be easy on themselves by encouraging them to relate to these expectations with self-care and self-compassion.

5.3.2 Expectations of Others

Similarly, people carry implicit expectations of others that are largely defined by social roles. This study suggest that when people are angry with others, they may perceive others as incompetent in their roles. What often goes unspoken is that the angry person is assuming that they are “better” or more competent. Such judgments of superiority may feed someone’s narcissism and help them feel better about themselves, but at the price of hinging their own sense of self-importance on feeling better than others. LKM helped participants in this study move away from relating to others judgmentally, and helped them focus on their own well-being instead of wasting energy comparing themselves with others. Therapist may be able to help clients better deal with anger by encouraging them to find ways of feeling good about themselves without having to compare themselves to others.

Surprisingly, positive judgments of others based on their social roles can also bring about anger if others “fail” or “fall from grace.” Labeling someone as “good” or expecting the

best of them comes at the price of being surprised or even shocked when they deviate from these expectations. While I personally believe that judging others positively is much healthier than judging them negatively, there may be something to be said about trying to limit judgment, be it positive or negative. If someone focuses too intently on the positive aspects of another, then they may not be able to tolerate others' actions that contradict this positive image, and may become angry in the face of evidence contradicting their idealization of the other. Therapists can help clients relate to others in a balanced way by encouraging them to consider the "big picture" without being too hasty in their judgment.

5.3.3 Rumination

One of the most surprising results of this study is that all participants ruminated on the upsetting behaviors of the angering other. One way to think of rumination in this context is that it is the way in which we relate to others in their absence. Our images, opinions, and judgments of others do not vanish in their absence. Rather we continue relating to others in our fantasy life. If this relating has a negative focus, then we can easily blow other's behaviors out of proportion and make a "mountain out of a mole hill." This study suggests that doing so primes individuals to face future encounters with the angering other anxiously and suspiciously. LKM gave participants the opportunity to interrupt the tendency to continue relating negatively to the angering other in their absence. Therapist can help clients working with anger to consider how they relate to others when they are away.

5.3.4 Containing Ambivalence and Tolerating Ambiguity

It is usually a sign of psychological health when someone possesses the capacity to tolerate contradictory thoughts and feelings without acting out. While it is much easier to think of others in black and white terms, it comes at the cost of experiencing emotional instability and

relational conflict. Focusing too intently on either the positive or the negative characteristics and actions of others may cause us to ignore evidence to the contrary. If the counterevidence continues to be ignored, then our judgments will rely more on fantasy than on reality. Idealizing love that tolerates abuse is similar to hate that compels abuse; both are caused by a narrow focus on one side of reality. A healthier attitude is one that tolerates ambiguity and accepts the unpredictability of others. LKM helped participants in this study develop an attitude of benevolent neutrality, an attitude of wishing well-being for the angering others. Therapist may be able to empower clients to have healthier relationships by fostering the toleration of contradictory thoughts and feelings.

5.3.5 Subjective Mediation and Taking Responsibility

Subjective mediation is the idea that our experiences of the world are interpretations and are not brute facts. Most importantly for this study, it means that our judgments of others are mediated by an active, rather than passive, process that weighs many factors in its balance. When others anger us, the judgments we make about them are often perceived with certainty and may be experienced as simple facts. For example, if I tell myself “John hates me,” I am much more likely to become angry than if I tell myself “I think John hates me.” The latter statement leaves open the possibility that I interpreted certain experiences in a way that led to the conclusion that John hates me. Choices were made along the path to becoming angry that could have been otherwise. LKM helped participants in this study take responsibility for their judgments and helped them take a step back to consider the validity of their judgments. Therapist can help clients cope with being angry by emphasizing the self-mediated nature of their feelings, thoughts, and judgments. When angry, shifting focus from others’ actions to one’s own actions seems to have a powerful effect.

5.3.6 Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to put oneself in another person's shoes and to make a genuine attempt to understand the other's world. An empathic mindset takes into consideration that others have their own lives that go on independently of one's wishes, and that others face many realities that one does not know of or understand. Empathy also brings to life the reality that others are driven by material circumstances and psychological motivations that are deeply rich and complex. This study suggests that the more people recognize and honor the deep complexity and richness of others, the more they are able to resolve interpersonal tensions.

One of the most powerful consequences of empathy is that it helps us "depersonalize" the conduct of others. People often become angry when they take others' behaviors personally. But once we realize that we are not the center of the other's universe, and that the angering other's actions are driven by a multitude of factors unrelated to us, then it is much easier to soften and calm down. Therapists can help clients deal with their anger by helping them evaluate to what extent the angering other's actions were targeting the client personally, and to what extent the other's actions were unrelated to the client.

5.3.7 Embracing Vulnerability and Imperfection

Embracing vulnerability means accepting that we are all finite, fallible, and imperfect beings, and that we are all susceptible to all kinds of suffering (sickness, disease, death, loss, helplessness, loneliness, violence, character flaws, etc.). It stands for the opposite of narcissism. The importance of understanding and dwelling with the mutual vulnerability of all people, especially of those who have hurt us, cannot be over stated. The denial of vulnerability is one of the most powerful barriers to comprehending the complexity of self and others. When vulnerability is denied, empathy and compassion are foreclosed. Without vulnerability there

cannot be empathy, and without empathy there is no understanding, and without understanding there is violence, ignorance, close-mindedness, and fear. If we cannot embrace our own vulnerability and the vulnerability of others, then we are doomed to narcissistic, unhealthy relationships.

Consider some of the situations that foster feelings of tenderness and affection: a tight and caring hug, the sweet memory of a loved one, the sight of an infant, or the loving gaze of another. Also consider that moments of profound and beautiful human connection, such as when complete strangers sacrifice for each other, or when compassion overcomes hate. Why does deep gratitude often bring tears? And why do moments of accomplishment and recognition sometimes cause people to cry? I believe that all these feelings and experiences require an appreciation of the vulnerability of the human condition. We are all on the path towards death, and appreciating this finitude empowers us to cherish meaningful moments. Therefore, when we can recognize the vulnerability of an angering other, and when we recognize that they can suffer just as deeply and possibly even more deeply than we do, then it is much easier to let go of anger and blame. Therapist can aid clients struggling with anger by helping them come into contact with their vulnerability.

5.3.8 Self-Care

Self-care is frequently emphasized in clinical settings. It is usually introduced in the form of healthy activities that clients' enjoy such as connecting with loved ones, positive affirmations, self-soothing, engaging in hobbies, and so on. The results of this study go a step beyond that, suggesting that self-care is an attitude or a perspective through which one can interpret the world in general. Participants in this study expressed a fundamental change in how they viewed themselves, others, and the world after consistently practicing LKM. Therapist can

foster this kind of attitude by encouraging clients to see themselves as they see a dear loved one, as they see an adorable infant, or any other image that helps clients induce feelings of tenderness.

5.3.9 Clinical Contraindications for Using LKM as an Intervention

Although I have not found any literature that directly addresses the contraindications of using LKM with clients, I will draw on my own clinical experience to offer some suggestions. Clients who have the tendency to debase themselves when they fail to meet their own or other's expectations can become very frustrated when they perceive themselves as "failing." For example, I saw one client cry when she could not easily visualize others while I was guiding her through a LKM. Another client, when asked to think of someone who loved him or her, felt horrible because this client could not think of anyone who truly loved her. Perhaps the biggest caution to clinicians working with LKM has to do with sending wishes of well-being to people who the client dislikes or hates. Clients who have suffered from physical or sexual abuse, or who struggle with persecutory anxieties—such as clients in paranoid psychotic states or severely regressed borderline states—should not practice LKM for people they dislike unless the clinician feels confident that these clients feel contained, safe, and secure.

Why is this case? Healthy relationships are nurturing because they help one feel loved. In order for one receive love, one must first acknowledge that one wants and needs to be loved. Want and need imply a certain lack or absence of something, in other words, incompleteness and imperfection. The risk of asking and wishing for acceptance and love is feeling rejected and hurt. The fear of rejection is one of the principle reason that drives people to deny their vulnerability.

5.4 Strengths and Limitations

The aim of this section is twofold. First, I will discuss the strengths and contributions of this study to the body of research on LKM. Second, I will discuss some of the weaknesses and limitations of this study, lending special attention to the potential dangers of unreflective spiritual practice.

5.4.1 Strengths of this Study

When I decided to embark on this study, one of my fears was that my results would get stuck in the vagaries of moralizing language. Most of the Buddhist literature—and even some of the experimental literature—simply assert that LKM helps people deal with life’s challenges by teaching them wisdom and compassion. But what is wisdom? And what is compassion? My goal was not to promote virtue ethics. Rather I wished to demonstrate the pragmatic and therapeutic powers of LKM. Luckily, this study was able to dive into participants’ experiences and identify the experiential unfolding of the effects of LKM on anger. It elucidated *how* LKM influences anger without getting bogged down in moralistic and religious construct laden language.

Furthermore, this study is in some sense a pioneering study. Although a handful of past studies have addressed LKM, all were experimental with the exception of Corcoran’s (2006) study. Corcoran’s study focused broadly on the benefits of LKM, without having an in-depth focus on how LKM affects specific experiences. This study is the first qualitative research on LKM that has a narrower focus on the relationship between LKM and a particular emotional state, namely being angry.

5.4.2 Limitations of this Study

This study has limitations on both the methodological and psychological levels. Methodologically, the study has a very small sample size of five. Such a small sample size limits the generalizability of its findings. Furthermore, participants in this study regularly attended Dharma talks, the Buddhist equivalent of a sermon. The influence of indoctrination on participants' self-reports cannot be ascertained given the selection bias inherent in the recruitment criteria. In addition, four out of the five participants practiced mindfulness meditation. Distinguishing the effects of LKM from the effects of other forms of meditation is not possible using the method chosen for this study. However, given the fact that several experimental studies that demonstrated the efficacy of LKM (Carson et al., 2005; Hutcherson et al. 2008) used naïve subjects whom had never been exposed to LKM or any other Buddhist practices, one can reasonably assume that LKM had a real effect on participants.

In terms of the psychological limitations, recall that the introduction of this study emphasized the importance of taking eastern practices on their own terms without prejudging them using western psychological concepts. This study utilized the Empirical-Phenomenological method precisely for this reason; it sets aside theoretical constructs in order to delve into the phenomenon on its own terms. Up to the end of the Results section, this study took participants' accounts at face value and did not attempt any criticism of said accounts. This was a crucial step because the meaning of the experience of LKM could easily be vitiated if the researcher simply tried to assimilate it into western paradigms. Having tried to be as neutral as possible, it is time to turn a more critical eye on LKM's potential to be counter-productive.

One danger of uncritically accepting the findings of this study is assuming that LKM is a panacea for all psychological problems. According to Welwood (2002), many spiritual

practitioners fall into the trap of “spiritual bypassing,” which is a mistaken conflation of self-denial with self-transcendence. Someone practicing LKM, when experiencing anger, may think that he or she should ignore the angry feelings and experience compassion instead. Compassion based on the denial of feeling angry, or based on the moral injunction that one should never be angry, is false compassion. True compassion embraces all of experience—especially experience that potentially causes suffering. Spiritually bypassing only exacerbates the problem of unreflectively relating to anger because it pushes the experience of being angry out of mind. Meanwhile, the angry feelings continue to operate outside of consciousness.

Authentic spiritual practice according to Welwood (2002) requires the grounding of self-transcending practices such as LKM in personal experience. He points out how the Buddhist tradition does not emphasize personal history and individual patterns. For western practitioners at least, ignoring developmental fixations, past traumas, interpersonal difficulties, mental illness, sexual desire, and aggressive impulses is a potentially devastating error that only exacerbates entrenched problems. Welwood tells a cautionary tale of a woman who escaped her discontented life in Europe and spent seven years roaming the monasteries of India, Nepal, and Tibet. She reported experiencing states of spiritual bliss and ecstasy that were very powerful and that extended for long periods of time. Upon returning to Europe, she met a man who she fell in love with. Their intense relationship threw her into a state of such profound psychological confusion and pain that she felt that all of the powers of her spiritual practice had vanished. She said that all of the insecurities that drove her to flee Europe returned and were stronger than ever. Only when she was able to work through and become conscious of her entrenched unconscious complexes was she able once again to reconnect with her spiritual powers.

Furthermore, spirituality, as with any other aspect of self, can be used to rationalize pathological behavior. For example, a narcissistic individual can easily use their spiritual practice to assert their superiority: “I can meditate for two hours and you can only meditate for one.” Similarly, a masochistic individual may invoke the virtue of compassion to justify inaction in the face of abuse. Welwood (2002) advocates for a balanced approach that synergistically combines spiritual practice with psychological analysis and developmental individuation.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The qualitative study of LKM, and especially its effects on specific psychological difficulties, is a nascent and burgeoning field. Most of the experimental research addressing the effects of LKM can easily spark ideas for qualitative research. Future studies should examine the effects of practicing LKM on a number of difficult emotions and clinical phenomena such as anxiety, depression, helplessness, hallucinations, delusions, etc. Future qualitative studies could also address a number of phenomena unrelated to psychopathology such as the relationship between LKM and well-being, LKM and physical health, LKM and personal growth, LKM and social connectedness, LKM and developing a sense of purpose etc..

5.6 Conclusions

Let us now attempt a concise and compacted answer to this study’s research question: How does the ongoing practice of LKM influence the way one handles being angry in everyday life? LKM helped participants in this study gain an internal distance from the angering incident, a distance that shifted their focus from the angering other to their own suffering, thus allowing them to reconnect with themselves and with their personal sense of tenderness and vulnerability. In turn, reconnecting with their vulnerability unveiled the angering other’s vulnerability, thus fostering empathy. This empathy brought to life the mutual responsibility of both parties in the

conflict, and engendered a perspicacious understanding of the broader context of the conflict. Furthermore, LKM helped bring into participants' focus the power of their own interpretations and judgments, and encouraged them to take ownership of their limited but real powers. Practicing LKM helped reveal the richness, complexity, and depth of self and other, and engendered a sense of personal responsibility and empowerment. LKM has the potential to be an effective intervention for people who struggle to relate meaningfully to the experience of being angry.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



Dr. Joseph C. Kush
Chair, IRB-Human Subjects
Office of Research
Phone (412) 396-6326 Fax (412) 396-5176
E-mail: kush@duq.edu

October 30, 2012

Re: The influence of loving-kindness meditation on everyday experiences of anger: An empirical phenomenological study – (PROTOCOL # 12-148)

Dr. Eva Simms
Department of Psychology
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh PA 15282

Dear Dr. Simms,

Thank you for submitting the research proposal of you and your student, Mr. Ibrahim Kurdieh, to the Institutional Review Board at Duquesne University.

Based on the review of IRB representative Dr. James P. Purdy, and my own review, I have determined that your research proposal is consistent with the requirements of the appropriate sections of the 45-Code of Federal Regulations-46, known as the federal Common Rule. The intended research poses no greater than minimal risk to human subjects. Consequently, the research is approved under 45CFR46.101 and 46.111 on an **expedited** basis under 45CFR46.110.

The consent form is attached, stamped with IRB approval and expiration date. You should use the stamped form as the original for copies you display or distribute.

The approval pertains to the submitted protocol. If you or Mr. Kurdieh wish to make changes to the research, you must first submit an amendment and receive approval from this office. In addition, if any unanticipated problems arise in reference to human subjects, you should notify the IRB chair before proceeding. In all correspondence, please refer to the protocol number shown after the title above.

Once the study is complete, please provide our office with a short summary (one page) of your results for our records.

Thank you for contributing to Duquesne's research endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joseph C. Kush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Kush" clearly legible, and a middle initial "C." in between.

Joseph C. Kush, Ph.D.

C: Dr. James P. Purdy

Appendix B: Electronic Consent Form

Title:	The Influence of Loving-Kindness Meditation on Everyday Experiences of Being Angry: An Empirical Phenomenological Study
Investigator:	Eva Simms, Ph.D. Psychology Department Duquesne University (412) 396-4348 simms@duq.edu
Co-Investigator:	Ibrahim I Kurdieh, M.A 5851 Morrowfield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 Kurdiehi@duq.edu ; (703) 300-1414
Source of Support:	This Study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Duquesne University
Purpose:	You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the effects of Loving-Kindness meditation on the experience of being angry. You will be asked to provide typed or written accounts of two experiences. The first will be a specific instance of loving-kindness meditation. The second will be a particular incident where you were angry and were able to cope with the anger through an experience of loving-kindness. After the written description, you will be asked to partake in one, face-to-face and digitally recorded interview with the researcher that will address your descriptions. This interview will be approximately sixty to ninety minutes in length and will be conducted at an agreed upon private location. In the event that a face-to-face interview is not possible, a digitally recorded phone interview will substitute.
Risks and Benefits	Potential risks for participation include the disclosure of sensitive personal information to the researcher and the dissertation committee. Recalling instances of being angry may cause discomfort as well. A potential benefit will be furthering your understanding of loving-kindness practice and how it affects your relationship with anger. Loving-Kindness mediation has the potential to become a helpful technique in the hands of psychologists who strive to alleviate suffering.
Confidentiality	Your name will never appear on any research documents, including the protocols, transcripts, and dissertation. You will be referred to by a pseudonym. The researcher will make every attempt to de-identify personal material in order to minimize the chances that you will be recognized by a reader. All paper

materials will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home, and all electronic material will be secured with a password. Audio recorded interviews will be given to a confidential transcription service in order to transcribe the audio into a written record. All data and materials will be subsequently destroyed five years after the completion of the research.

- Right to Withdraw You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time during or after the research.
- Summary of results: Upon your request, a summary of the research results will be provided after the completion of the study.
- Voluntary Consent: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any moment. Upon these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that if I have further questions, I may call Ibrahim Kurdieh, M.A. (703) 300 1414, or Eva Simms, Ph.D. (412) 396-6520. I can also contact Joe Kush, IRB Chair, at 412-396-1151 or kush@duq.edu.

Typing your name here constitutes your written signature:

Date:

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix C: Access Questions

Thank you very much for choosing to participate in this study. I understand that this will take time and effort on your part, and for that I am deeply grateful.

There are two things being asked of you here, for which there are two separate forms. The first form, provided in another document, asks you to provide informed consent. The second form, provided below, asks you to provide typed responses to the access questions. For the informed consent form, kindly provide your electronic signature and date. For the access requests, please respond to the requests below. Your emailed documents will be password protected upon receipt.

Please respond to the following requests to the best of your ability. Take the time to bring your experiences vividly back to life. Once you have completed your accounts, kindly email the consent form along with your typed accounts to kurdiehi@duq.edu. If it is not possible to provide electronic documents via email, please handwrite them, in print, as clearly and legibly as possible. Mail the consent form and written responses to the following physical address: 5851 Morrowfield Ave # 13. Pittsburgh, PA 15217. You will be refunded any postage costs. If you have any questions please contact Ibrahim Kurdieh via email at kurdiehi@duq.edu, or via phone at (703) 300-1414

First Request

Recall your experience during a particularly significant loving-kindness meditation.

Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. In writing, describe your experience as vividly as you can, including specific details to help me understand what it was like for you.

Second Request

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that loving-kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first request, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life.

Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, 4) and what happened after that? How

did loving-kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life.

Appendix D: Transcriptions of Participant Interviews

Arvind

Note that Arvind did not provide a response to the first access request. All other participants did.

Second Request

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that loving-kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first request, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life. Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, 4) and what happened after that? How did loving-kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life.

This is my personal experience. One of my close friends asked some of money from me. [Ok can you say something about your relationship with this friend?] *I know him very well and he's a Bengali friend and so he was in terrible situation financially when I met him....met her. And actually then I she...she committed sometimes...sometimes she wanted to ...committed suicide. Um then I told her I'm so sorry I have to help her. That's why I um gave...gave her actually all of the money that I had at that moment and [all of your money?] all of money, [ok go ahead].*

But I trust her very well because I thought she will become...so...you know she will run a business and she will...because I give some hints to start a business and this kind of business will ah help you and I can help you finding some other um...business people from outside the country and also you do something very good and you can become well and also you can treat your children...and they have a very misery condition at the moment and her husband is not working. You are in a very very...um bad situation, so I can give some but you have to give it back...give it to me back. That's what the uh situation was.

Then I gave but she didn't sign any legal document. Later when I asked about money, he just ignore me and said this and that. [Ok can you explain what happened] *Ya when she didn't answer the phone sometimes. If answer then she says...mmm why you are making trouble making, making disturbed me? Why you are disturbing I did this and that why you asking money now. I don't have money I don't have I'll give it later I don't have I don't know. That's what he said. [This and that?] That means she would get really angry. She thought that I am disturbing her and she thought that I am doing something very bad to her. Ask him money. [Ok so this and that means that you're...you're disturbing her?] Yes. She thought at the beginning she is not financially in a good situation. After she got the money from me she thought that that money belongs to her.*

She told ...she felt the ownership for that...she didn't commit to um....run a business properly and....um....become more rich person and become ...do his or her own things properly. Instead of that she thought ok I have to grab all the money and keep it with me. But...um several times I explained that is not the way. You can earn some money and you can return it then if you can do that that is the best way because I trust you. I don't have any legal documents with your. So it is your duty and...it is your ...because you're in a real bad situation that's why I help you. I explain her but she said all the time "no I have done this...I don't have money at the moment I

have started a business so um...I don't have. That's what ya...It looks like a very um...sometimes it looks like arrogant. Most of the time she didn't answer the phone. When I asked money she didn't answer the phone. [How long did you wait between you gave her the money until you ask her to return it?] One year. May I read? [Mhm].

Then I got so angry, it was unbearable situation in my life [Can you say something more about unbearable situation?] *I felt so heavy myself. I had a lot of anger, frustration. Why did I do this? ...this kind of (pause) they don't really see... She didn't really understand uh this that's why she did this? I could...anger...I don't know what...that is the anger....I had anger....I want to do something bad for her. That means just destroy the business or destroy the reputation and ...and tell to other people she she did something real bad for me and this is what I felt. [Ok, go ahead and read] Sometimes I thought that I want to do something so bad for her. So bad actually sometime I thought that it is better to kill. [So you were deeply injured]. Yes deeply injured by...ya.*

I thought this is not the way to solve this issue. Actually sometimes I talk with my friends about this situation. Um and also I thought "what I am before that actually before I started practicing Loving-Kindness?" So uh (pause) I thought actually why I ...don't use another way of approach to this. One thing...she is spend all the money. I had to understand that anyhow it has gone. Sometimes there are might be some mismanagement it is her issue it is not my mistake. But I have done something good uh I did it in very very mmm in a benign way I did that but at the moment I I am already frustrated and I don't have money so I am having anger. Then I thought: ok, I have lost not only this money I have lost lost so many things in my life...why I am worried about only this particular situation. So I just thought, ok, I mmm...I...what I did what I did lit the candle and look at the candle and sit on the cushion and I thought...I just thought...I just forgive her. May same as light brighten here and now may she be able to gain the wisdom and the intelligence and the knowledge and the wisdom to to understand this situation. I'm not going behind her and disturb her. I just bless her may you be able to solve this problem. I don't want to involve to their trend to pollute myself. That's why I thought I don't want to pollute in the middle. I just do something totally different that is I am thinking about me you be able to gain the wisdom. May you be able to gain the good way of thinking. Then you will understand real situation. You...you will not do something bad for me and bad for you. That's what I thought.

[Can you say a little more?...It seems that there was a dramatic shift from this very intense anger...] *Actually because I was thinking I need to go there...I need to buy a ticket and go right away there and talk her. Then I thought "Why I am doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her?" If I I do that, I will do something wrong really wrong. I will hit her, I'll do something bad and is that ok? It's not good. So I I postponed buying ticket and then I thought...no I don't want to. It is...it is a long process of..uh..uh thinking struggling in my mind and finally I thought I have to think the light...the candle light is brighten...is giving the light and uh, the darkness go away. Same way, may she be able to gain the light into her life and solve the problem...and I don't want to um blow my light in my heart. [Ok, continue].*

Finally I told this is not the way. If she wants give it to me, she will give, but I do not what to harbor hatred in my mind and pollute my mind. I started to practice Loving-Kindness for myself and for her. [So what was it like for you after you decided um that you don't want to pollute your mind with hatred...] *Because when I have hatred...anger...I feel so much of anger and hate frustration all sort of bad things, I blow up myself and become so emotional and*

I think ...I think ...it is really hard to bare in my mind in my heart. It is heavy...I thought this is heavy I don't want this. I can't bear this. I don't want either. I can't...that is what I thought...I don't want that of solution I don't want. It is so easy to just relax and send the blessing Loving-Kindness to her and also send Loving-Kindness to myself. [What was it like for you to send Loving-Kindness to her?] Actually when I am sending the Loving-Kindness I felt I visualized that she become so nice and having a beautiful smile and her face and she's trying really hard ...trying to solve the problem not to escape from the problem. That's what I felt. I felt so happy...oh it's nice...why I am do something bad? I felt that happiness in my mind too. [So in a way your image of her changed when you practiced?] Yes, in practice her image also change.

[Go ahead] She call me and promised that I'll try my best to give back your money. Few days after after few days she call and she text me and I am in this situation and I am so sorry I'll try my best. And at that time actually, what I did...I save some more money and I thought I am not totally depend on the money that I gave ...given. I have to find some other money because that is...this is not the only money in this world (chuckle) I managed to save some more money and um go smoothly in my life. If I give back I can use it. If not ok. [What was it like for you to hear her saying "I'll try my best to give you your money back?"] Actually I'm not really care about that. I don't trust that time. I don't think that much that she will give me money because she has done something in the...at the begging at the middle she has something um...in a bad way...not answer phone calls and trying escape and so I felt neutral feeling. I don't want this if you can it's your duty. But I don't want to um keep hundred percent trust on that. [Ok, and if you don't mind me asking, what happened? Did you ever get your money back?] No.[How many years has it been since] now actually almost three years. But now I'm actually I feel two things. One, if she has used that money for their beneficial, I'm happy. If she's has um...if she's used that money for some other gambling or something in ruin their life, I feel so sad.

Mary

First Request

Recall your experience during a particularly significant Loving-Kindness meditation. Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. In writing, describe your experience as vividly as you can, including specific details to help me understand what it was like for you.

I was starting the Loving-Kindness meditation. The teacher was directing it! I was hurting and my head was ringing! All of a sudden I got this tingling feeling all over my arms and upper body. It kind of felt like my heart was trying to jump out of my body. It was like a tingling, rippling sensation. Also as if I was getting the goose bumps. I felt a great piece come over me and a great joy. [Can you say something a little bit more about this experience of joy?] *Ya, it's um, it's an overwhelming joy. It's not like you know I'm happy like you buy a new pair of shoes. I mean I'm not a big shoe person (laughs) [laughs]. Did you ever do anything where you're like really really happy? Your whole body feels it and then like I was in Georgia at the Zoo and I was just like really happy being away...and at the zoo with my cousins. It's that kind of joy. [Great]. And there has been times where I was so moved by the Loving-Kindness meditation that tears would uncontrollably roll down my face. That was when I*

was in the most pain. I have to sit on a chair because I could not sit that long on a cushion when my back was bad! [So you said that...that um the tears would uncontrollably run down my face when you in the most pain, so were they tears of...like joy or like a mix of joy and pain]. *To me it was like I was releasing something, because um sometimes we would do the Loving-Kindness meditation together or alone without the big crowd and it was more like a healing thing. Tears would just come down you know. And then it started overflowing into the chanting class. I would be sitting in the back and it would be in the meditation part and I would just be crying and crying. So to me it was something that touched me so deeply that it released. Because you can't be in that kind of pain without having all this stuff built up inside. [For sure]. Is that helping?* [Everything you say is helpful. You don't have to worry about not being helpful].

Second Request

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that Loving-Kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first request, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life. Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, 4) and what happened after that? How did Loving-Kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life.

There is someone at class. Who always comes in late and shifts and wiggles around and makes noises.

[The sense I get from the sentence that there was something about this person's behavior that was disruptive?] *I would be very aggravated because they didn't just wiggle, they would do this (leans forward). If someone would be in front of them and they would be this much from their head (gestures with her fingers to indicate a few inches) [On the cushion?] they were on the chair and they kept you know making noises like grunting noises and stuff... [Ok] I would find myself thinking I am glad I am not that person sitting below them. [What do you imagine the person below them is experiencing?] Well um I would...I think they were annoyed too and after a while they would turn around and look. So I think they weren't too happy either. So it was more than me that was being disrupted. But they never say a word like "hey! Back away!" or something. I would get so agitated at them that I would lose my meditation and get angry at their lack of respect. [Can you say something more about this lack of respect?] Well, I just feel that they're late every time. It doesn't show respect first of all to be late all the time. Like all the time, when we're pretty far into the um and um and then just ah being all over the place and hovering over somebody because I don't know if they weren't comfortable. For me you should keep some type of boundary you know. Cause everybody is there for their own reasons, and someone you don't even know is on top of you. It's like somebody sleeping on you in the airplane (laughs) [laughs].*

[It sounds to me...there's something...it sounds like you were kind of interpreting their intentions right?] *Ya I was kind of you know...cause you make up all these stories you know like...at first it was about her just you know being annoying. I just could only focus on them and how rude I perceived them to be. I find myself even annoyed at them later when we*

were all having tea! [So you were kind of carrying a grudge]. *I didn't want to be around them. If they went that way, I'd go the other way. I was like (gestures by turning her back) I didn't want any part of them.*

The last time though I started thinking that I don't know their story. [How did Loving-Kindness help you in this situation specifically? *Well...because um I think it just made me feel more aware no matter how I feel about the other person we're connected. If I'm thinking negatively towards them, then it's only gonna come back and affect me, because we're all connected if we like it or not. Which I didn't think until now. What if they have a problem? I started thinking that maybe there's a good reason. Maybe X had a back condition? The same for driving. I was such an angry driver. You know so impatient. I'm trying to think of the other person and I don't know...maybe they're hurt or afraid or whatever that's causing them to be really slow or cut you off or whatever they do wrong.*

Maybe it took everything they could do in their power to just get there then, maybe even after a hard day's of work that made them late. And maybe they have back problems that they can't sit still! I found myself feeling bad for this person and sending them Loving-Kindness vibrations during meditation. And I was able to meditate alongside them even with their distractions. [So you were able to meditate next to this person in a different...] *Ya in a whole different...like it didn't bother me that they were moving. I almost didn't even notice that they were moving. I even found myself thinking that if I saw them again, I would go say hi.*

Kerri

First Request

Recall your experience during a particularly significant Loving-Kindness meditation. Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. In writing, describe your experience as vividly as you can, including specific details to help me understand what it was like for you.

My memorable experience during group guidance meditation when I was at the meditation Center. I always try to sit as close to the monks as possible because once I was told that people's energy can be felt six feet in all directions, and I want to share in as much of the positive experience as I can. I usually have a hard time following the monk as he guides us. My mind is very active during this time. As we neared the end of the meditation, he was directing us to wish all of those in practice with us to be well, happy and peaceful. The most amazing sense of calm actually overcame me and brought tears to my eyes, cause in that moment, I felt a tremendous sense of connection to all those people around me. My fears and worries and anxieties that usually plagued me seem to diminish. I had a strange sense of no longer being alone in my problems and my life, because there are others who are wishing me well and spreading their Loving-Kindness to me. [So let's stop here for a second, so you know, uh, this description you have here of your fears and worries and anxieties kind of diminishing and and... feeling more connected. Do you think you could say a little bit more about that?] . *(Pause). (Sigh). This..this sadness...I don't know what the sadness is...the sadness is I'm just sad (chuckle) I don't know. But it isit (pause) the comfort in that moment it just makes the sadness go away in that moment.* [Mhm I was trying to get a sense of where your sadness was coming from if it was about the feeling of connectedness or about the struggles you are having or both] *Both...Both...I feel very disconnected from people. I'm surrounded by my*

family, but yet it's not....I work with my family every day, but it is not one where I feel support and encouragement. I love them tremendously and I'm sure they love me too...but on our level that we have, it's just not...I still feel very alone...all my decisions are mine...any struggles I have are mine...and I just feel like I'm tackling big problems by myself. [Mhm....I imagine that that is very overwhelming] Mhm...mhm. [So you want to continue?]

Um it was very empowering, so for me it wasn't the experience of sending Loving-Kindness to other it was receiving the Loving-Kindness being directed to me that was so impacting. When I find myself feeling overwhelmed, I try to reflect back on that moment and realize that I am not alone, and that others are with me wishing me well. *[So what does it mean for you to feel connected?] Um....(pause)...hm....(pause) it means that I belong, means that no matter what happens there are people who will be supportive or (pause) that won't be judgmental depending on how my circumstances play out. [Ok thank you].*

Second Request

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that Loving-Kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first request, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life. Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, 4) and what happened after that? How did Loving-Kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life.

Alright, so...umm, let's start on the second part]. **My true life experience when I tried to use Loving-Kindness in my life was actually quite recent. I'm in the middle of a very nasty divorce with a very defensive and verbally abusive man** *(nervous chuckle).* *[What is it like...what is it like for you to be in the middle of this circumstance...this divorce]. It's horrific, especially when you have two kids, and it's no longer about you, it's about making sure that everything plays out well for them [Mhm] and trying to make the right decisions financially, emotionally, it's just very very overwhelming. And you have to second guess everything you do, you can't say anything that'll make him mad. You don't wanna do anything that will harm the kids. It's it's just a constant back and forth between right and wrong....and it... it's horrible. [it sounds like you are torn in so many directions] Mhm...Mhm...Mhm and it's very unpredictable, I know my life is like....now I know how I live, I know how my kids live, but at any point all that could change, so what will the future be like? So it's it's just hard. [Ya... I can only imagine].*

[Alright so, go ahead and continue] **Any conversation that we engage in that doesn't involve our children results in a test of patience for me***[um so what ...um ...so it's ...there's a suggestion here it seems to me a kind of an implicit suggestion, that there is something about...um...when you're talking about your children...arguing about your children that makes you feel more patient that with other things] we don't really argue about our children, so that is the one place where there is no....we tend to tackle that equally with compassion. We both want*

the best for our kids. So that is the only topic we can have a normal conversation about. Anything else seems to be a trigger for everything else that comes (pause.)

Ok, um, huh, he seems to think the louder and more vulgar he becomes, the more likely he is to get his desired outcome [can you say something about what it's like for you to be in this state where you are being shouted at] *for me, I'm pretty good at dissociating (chuckle) so I tend to just go somewhere else (chuckle) so... (pause) I... I usually am able to just stand there and just let him go about his business, and I can just think about something else. But...if I act...I can either take that approach or become very defensive myself and... my...my sole purpose... when I become that way, my sole purpose is just to convince him that I'm not wrong...that no ... this is better...this is...you know, and then I'm always justifying...defending...and I take that approach...so...um...it's an...and that all depends on...like The mood I'm in. If I'm scared how angry he is...you know...I don't know...what kind of time frame we have (chuckle.) If I have enough time to let him stand there and work itself out...then it takes a different course, but if I'm, but if the kids have to be at soccer then you just give in and say...ok...whatever...that's fine...we have to go to soccer. So...does that answer your question? [Mhm] **I had become very numb to the name calling and put downs, but I am still very emotionally sensitive to other people's anger***

On this occasion we were standing in the kitchen, the island strategically position between us, and it started. [So um, keep going... go ahead] (Clears throat) **I was determined in this instance not to cave and agree with him just because my own fears....so in my head I just kept saying "I wish you well, happy, and peaceful"** [uh...not to cave?] *Mhm, I don't know, not to crumble (chuckle) not to give in and just say...ok you're right I'm wrong [just to kind of get it over with?] just to kind of get it over with..., ya. **So I know that his anger and issues are just symptoms of much deeper pain and suffering, so I thought if I just kept only sending him love and kindness it would defuse the situation.*** [Let me ask you about this uh...I know that his anger and issues are just a symptom of a much deeper pain and suffering, could you say more]. *Well I know, I know he comes from um from... his family has a history...his parents were divorced; his mom married a man who was not the best man in the world. Then he was raised by his grandparents at some point. Currently he's a self-employed builder so the ...he ...the economy is having an impact on him... um...he had a brother pass away a couple of years ago. So there are issues in his life that are causing him to suffer. And it's spilling over onto everything else.*

So I thought that if I kept on only sending him Loving-Kindness, it would defuse the situation, although that is probably my way of trying to control things. [uh...it .sounds to me like ... and correct me if I'm wrong...that say I wish you well happy and peaceful made you somehow ...protected you in some way] *sure...I used it as a shield I'm sure. [So um...did you feel like the "I wish you well happy peaceful" came up spontaneously?] Mhm it comes up spontaneously now. **I believe it worked.*** [You say that although this is probably my way of controlling things, I believe it worked, what do you mean by that?] *Because I still think that it is*

my responsibility to calm him down, to make him stop yelling. I think now...I just think now that this is my new superpower...to keep him under control.

[And how would the situation have been different if you hadn't said those phrases] *If I didn't have that tool, if I were having this conversation that I was having that day a year ago before I began practice, my natural instinct would have been to say...you are an idiot...in my mind....I hope a boulder falls from the sky and falls on your head....I'd be thinking those kinds of thoughts...instead of wishing him well...I'd be in my mind...I can't believe I married you...why did I do that?...I wouldn't say it out loud, but those kind of thoughts would go through your head which would keep the anger festering in me and in him andjust keeps the situation going because now I have the same feelings....even though I don't show them certainly wasn't Loving-Kindness thoughts...certainly was not Loving-Kindness thoughts going through my head (chuckle) so...*

[Go ahead] **After about forty five minutes of this uncontrollable anger and verbal assault, he actually started to calm down and reflect on his behavior. The situation was no longer about me and about how mad I make him mad, but it was about that actual topic that started the conversation in the first place.** [You said after that he started to calm down and reflect on his behavior, what gave you that impression?] *because he stopped yelling and started....um....eh...hmmm instead of standing there yelling and screaming at me, he was still pacing back and forth, but it was more a ... I've screwed everything up, I don't know what's wrong with me, like he was...he was no longer yelling or screaming or projecting onto me...he was just looking at himself... and his role in the whole situation. [And was this typical?] No very untypical.....um...*

Um...the situation was no longer about me and how I how I mad...and how mad I make him angry, but it was then about the actual topic that started the conversation in the first place. [It sound as if using Loving-Kindness in this situation help contain his anger] I just think normally when you're confronting somebody, or when someone is confronting you, your anger doesn't give them anywhere else to go, but to continue being angry. So for me if felt like if I'm upset, he's just gonna stay upset. So unless I give him something to...unless I reflect I reflect something better back at him...it just...it just doesn't change. [So you're kind of breaking the cycle?] Yes

Practicing Loving-Kindness just gave me the space I needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain, the situation was able to continue until he was able to look at the situation through better eyes. I think this further elaborates my last question. I was wondering if you could say something about this ...the phrase, um that "it gave me the space I needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on] *Mhm...by using Loving-Kindness I wasn't any longer engaged in the anger and the frustration of the moment. He was still angry and he was still frustrated, but I was not a part of it. It was just here, so I was able to be over here watching his anger, and kind of understanding where he was coming from...but at the same time*

not participating in it. [So he had a chance to look at it through better eyes himself. It sound like he was affected by your use here of Loving-Kindness] *I think he was affected by my non-participation (chuckle) do you know what I mean? [Yes] Loving-Kindness gave me an option I didn't have before. The only choice I had before was to be defensive and reactive and emotional and that's all I knew. But now I know something else that separates me from that.*

Rahul

First Request

Recall your experience during a particularly significant Loving-Kindness meditation. Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. In writing, describe your experience as vividly as you can, including specific details to help me understand what it was like for you.

[Go ahead and start] **I sat down and explore different thoughts in the mind. Then I purposely brought thoughts of well-being to my mind. I released all judgments about me. I felt that right now I am completely ok.** [So, can you tell me a little bit more about what you mean by ah I released all judgments about me?] *Uh, it means that sometimes we think bad about ourself, you know, there are a lot of expectations put on us by other people and sometimes ourselves by ourselves and uh and sometimes we can achieve those expectations, sometimes we cannot. [Mhm] And based on that we have....some forms of resentments and disappointments about ourselves. Um but when I sit for Loving-Kindness meditation I purposely explore that I have such thing in the deep of my mind, and purposely you know I try to release them and just only focusing on the very experience that I am having at that moment. And that moment I am comfortable, I am sitting in a comfortable posture, my body is held well and my mind is relaxed and I make sure that at least, at this moment, I am ok. I have no...I have no...I haven't felt so to speak, so right now I am completely ok. So that's what I mean by releasing judgment.*

[Go ahead] **I made a genuine wish for myself, "May I be well, happy and peaceful." I repeated these words in my mind. Then I felt my body very clearly. I felt that both my body and mind were relaxed. Then I extend the same wish to others. Starting with close ones I gradually extended the wish to all. I wished, "May they be well, happy and peaceful." Once I extended the wish to the whole world, I felt a wide openness in my heart** [Can you say something about uh....about feeling wide openness in your heart] *It's only an experience...your only experience is towards the end of LKM because you know one you start feeling ok and you know, wishing genuinely "may I be well and strong and happy and peaceful" and then slowly we wish the same to different circles of people you know. And then after you finish all people in the world I will go onto other beings, wishing them also to be well and happy and peaceful. So at the end you are almost like opening your heart to each and every beings in the world. In a certain way you embrace the whole universe through Loving-Kindness. So uh in that stage you feel like uh...almost that you feel like you are transparent and there is nothing blocking you. Your radiation, your wish, your extension of Loving-Kindness has no blockage. So you feel like this is just simply permeating and you feel like there is no one in the world that I cannot reach. So that kind of you know lightness, openness.*

I continue to be in that openness for a while *because that's really um serene experience to come to that level and just enjoy that you know openness and you say free floating. I felt that I*

am fully transparent. I felt that there is no blockage of my wish, and there is no one in the world who I cannot wish well-being. I felt like my wish is limitless. And then I felt it deeply in my body and my mind. It's not only that openness and then a relaxation, not just...not only happen in the mind but you clearly feel it in your body too. [Mhm]

I felt that I am fully transparent. I felt that there is no blockage for my wish. There is no one in the world whom I cannot wish well-being. I felt that my wish is limitless. At the end, I felt deep peace in my body and mind.

Ok, that is the experience of meditation. Do you want me to go to the next one? [Ya].

Second Request

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that Loving-Kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first request, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life. Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, 4) and what happened after that? How did Loving-Kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life.

Last year a Buddhist organization in Malaysia requested an article from me for a magazine. They proposed a topic to me. I was very busy with my studies those days. I told them that I would not be able to do this. [Can you tell me about this experience of being busy, what was going on in your life at the time?] *As I remember, I was...that was an end of semester. I was writing my papers and so it was a really busy time, and of course I have other obligations in the temple too....studies and other things. So it was really a problem with having the time. [Mhm].*

However, after a month, a lady who coordinated this project approached me again and asked me whether I can do it. Since they made this request a number of times, I thought to find some time and write this article. [What compelled you to write the article?] *One thing is that when they requested a few times I thought that maybe they...they have not been able to find another person to write on this topic and so I thought maybe they need help on that particular topic. So um so I thought if they cannot find anyone, so they still think that I am the one who can help them. I thought ok in that case I will find some time. (Pause) then I replied to her that I would send this article*

Then I replied to her that I would send this article. Just before I started to write this article I sent her an email informing her that I started writing this and would send it within two days. *Because the reason that I send them, because I really wanted to make sure that whether they had not found somebody else, or did they really wanted me to write because I was going to spend some time...I really need to know so I sent an email before I started to write it. [In order to make sure whether they really wanted you to write, or whether they were just trying to find somebody] anybody or whether they have found somebody else, and whether it is necessary that I should really dedicate myself like this. To make sure that still that need is there.*

I did not get any reply from her [How did you feel when you didn't get a reply from her?] *Uh a little angry because you know, I was a little scared, maybe she is busy or you know, um (pause) so it's not clear. It's not clear to me so I prefer not to make judgments, you know, uh and I kept that open; who knows what has happened? Maybe computer broke down, I don't know. So I just keep myself optimistic and just keep on writing. But you know I am not writing all the while when I send the email. I was doing other things and finding some time slot to finish this.*

But on the last day, I realized that I haven't finished this, and then I kept writing this in the night, because I promised them that I would send it in two days so this is the last day. I thought that I would be able to finish this within few hours, but it kept going and going and by the time I complete the article, it was 5 am in the morning. I started about nine or ten. I was happy that I completed this. Then I sent the article through email and went to sleep. After three hours sleep, I woke up and checked my email to make sure whether I have received an email from the lady confirming the receipt of the article.

[Eh, it sounds like you were anxious to hear back from her] *Ya because I didn't hear from her too in the beginning. And then just I wanna make sure whether it has gone. I want to make sure that I submitted the article within the days that I promised them, just to double check whether they have received it, whether they can read it, whether they can open it. [There was no communication?]No communication... Ya.*

There was an email from her but it said that they do not need the article now because the editing committee had changed the format of the magazine. As soon as I saw this e mail, I felt really angry. I felt that all the time and energy I spent in the whole night was wasted. *The whole reason I got angry is because I spent whole night writing this and I felt that now they're not going to use the article, and so I felt that you know, my time is wasted, feeling frustration and not ah and and (pause) and also particularly angry with uselessly, I mean my time was wasted, my energy was wasted. That was the main thing.*

I felt angry with the lady who coordinated this project. If she informed me this little early, I would not have to work so hard in the night. Also feelings of not being welcome and not being accepted and also kind of losing hope. I started to have many angry thoughts. I talked my friends and told them what happened and how I felt. For a few hours, I was feeling very bad. . I really felt that I...I'm I just felt my suffering, how I suffer and what I'm going through...I could feel that how um heavy that feeling is.

However, I begin to realize how unhappy I am due to this incident. *After that incident I really felt that you know, that this is not the way I feel, you know, I was still able to feel ah the difference between my normal lived-being and that how I felt how I was feeling in the experience that I was going through then, soI think that I could clearly feel the difference, ya. In the beginning it's angry; my focus is on that lady didn't communicate with me. Then my feeling of frustration, so that's just the initial state. Angry frustration, you are feeling that kind of thing. And then after a while, a few hours you begin realize how it is burdensome, and I slowly you know, I think attention is more shifting to you, and you start to think, how much suffering, how much heaviness, how much burdenness, and how uncomfortable you are. Attention is most certainly shifting to myself. And then when I realize that this uncomfortable, the changes in the body, the changes in the brain, the changes in the heartbeat...everything.*

I started to watch my mind and body and realized that I am suffering a lot. When I become aware of these disturbing mental and bodily states, I thought to myself that this is not good for me. [Can I ask you about um (pause) you understood that now I am suffering, and this is not good, I need to change it. There seems to be some kind of transition. Um, *there is a second burden to me. So I feel like this is not good for me. You know I mean, the people who did those things may not know that I am so angry, and then but, you know, it doesn't matter how they react, but this feeling, this changes that happen in my body and mind is not healthy for me, it's not going to, so I realized that it's not good for me. So* **Then I watched my angry thoughts about the lady. I realized that I am blaming her all the time in my mind though she lives a thousand miles away. I thought that I should get rid of this suffering state.**

I decided to bring my practice of Loving-Kindness to deal with this situation, It was difficult in the beginning [Can you say something about the difficulty in the beginning]. *It's really difficult in the beginning because your mind is again draw to the angry thoughts because you realize that she hasn't done a good thing. So...so you try to bring Loving-Kindness, and your mind is uh pulling you, she hasn't done well, so she has done a mistake. So kind of you know taking of the mind back to angry thoughts. Although it was difficult in the beginning I slowly direct Loving-Kindness to myself and wish myself to be well, happy and peaceful. So instead of focusing on her, I try to focus on myself, I wish myself, and after. I felt some relief after a while.*

Then my mind was little clear. [Can you say something about your mind being clear?] *I finally wish myself well-being and happiness...and and then and I stopped you know creating those sort of thoughts, and I also somehow, uh get some release from these uncomfortable feelings, then, so my mind was a little more stable and peaceful without a lot of thoughts.*

Then a thought arose in me that I have not wasted anything. *So now I try to find some goodness in this whole thing, because now I feel that my time is wasted so I felt everything is negative, but when my mind is clear I should find some goodness in this whole process. So then I realized that I have produced an article, ya, so it has not been accepted to publish, but article is with me, I have produced something. So I felt that you know, I have not wasted anything you know. Though my article would not be published in this magazine, I learned a lot in the process of writing because you know, I felt that you know the topic that I wrote, after I complete the article, I had more clear idea about that subject, more than um before. So in that very process of writing, actually I learn a lot too. It is with me, I have not wasted time...and even you know, maybe I could give article to someone else you know. This isn't really an academic article but more towards a general audience.*

First I felt good about myself. Then I was trying to think some goodness in this lady *So only after I make myself peaceful I find some goodness in this process and then only I actually direct my you know, thoughts to her, and find some goodness, whether she has demonstrated any goodness in that interaction. I tried to imagine myself as her. So this is what we do in Loving-Kindness meditation, we try to put ourselves in other person's shoes. I was trying to understand her situation there. Then I realized that she was merely coordinating this project and she did not have any authority over this project. [What made you able to see her perspective?] *In the beginning, I am only focusing on the mistake she did, so I kind of you know, my mind is clouded by all these negative things, but now my mind is little bit clear. I didn't**

realize that in the beginning, it's only later you know, when I was trying this and realized that uh, she is only a kind of mediator, she has no authority over this project.

In that case, she cannot be fully responsible for the decision made by the editing committee. Though she could have been better in communicating with me, I realized that she did not do any harm to me purposely. Then I started to feel sympathy for her. *So I felt that in the beginning, I put my all anger to her, but now I realize that she is playing a different role, and she has no power, she is not responsible for the decision made by the committee, she didn't make that decision. The only thing that she has done was that she was delayed in communicating with me. So now her fault is more um (pause) lenient than earlier because now I realize that ah...she hasn't done kind of severe mistake as I, you know, imagine earlier.*

[Would you say understanding that her actions were not purposeful helped you calm down?]
Yes, because I realized that at worst she was negligent in responding to me, but realized that she is not purposely trying to harm me. She didn't have any intention to harm me ...harm me.
[When you first saw her email...] my feeling is that she is you know making this whole problem [and that it's personal, that...that...] I Ya, personal, you feel hurt. I wrote her an e mail in friendly terms explaining how I felt when I received her e mail but at the same time how I understand her situation. So actually I told her how angry I was when I first saw email, and I just explained to her what I felt. And also, I ...I told her that I understand her situation and that she is not fully responsible for all the decisions.

She replied me with a lot of regret and confessed that she was suffering from migraine and could not work for two days. That is why she could not send me an email informing the change of plan of the committee before I submitted my article *[What was it like for you to hear that she had a migraine for two days?]* *My sympathy grow further and further and I thought that how good...how good that I didn't reply her when I was angry! Um...because ya, so I felt that you know that such a good thing that I didn't reply her and I also felt bad that that I felt angry about her in the beginning, but I am also ok because I later slowly managed to you know, reduce it. And also, my whole problem was that I spending the whole night writing article. It is not her fault too, it is my decision to spend all night (chuckle). She didn't ask me to spend whole night writing this (laughs). In the beginning I was projecting everything to her, but now I begin to see more detail and then...and we can see different conditions create this situation, and not any one person is responsible for the whole thing*

Jane

First Request

Recall your experience during a particularly significant Loving-Kindness meditation. Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life. In writing, describe your experience as vividly as you can, including specific details to help me understand what it was like for you.

For much of my life I have had a great interest in knowing about the people, cultures, and governments of other countries as well as our own. I kept current on difficulties in countries that were struck by floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters that have devastated large areas and a great number of people. There was a calling for donations from several well known emergency agencies requesting financial support to help give aid

to these situations. It felt really good to be able to make contributions and I felt like I had contributed to the welfare of others.

[So what does it mean for you to contribute to the welfare of others?]

Um, it means, like, uh, in caring for other people, um, that it's also important to contribute to their welfare, and I think that the first statement said about knowing about other people in other cultures and government or other cultures and countries. In my wanting to know about them, then I would want to contribute to their welfare, to their, to the goodness in their life. [Ok, so its...that's something that you consider important to be able to contribute] to people who are suffering, right.

Requests kept coming on a monthly basis from one emergency service after I had made the initial donation. I felt such a wash of regret when the requests came month after month. I knew I had done what I could do but I also felt like I would like to do more.

When tragedy happens anywhere, the teacher in the center that I attend always does a Loving-Kindness meditation for the people involved in the tragedy. That was helpful for the people involved as well as for people who were a part of the meditation practice

[Could you say a little more about the sentence “that was helpful for the people involved as well as for people who were a part of the meditation practice.

It felt good again, to contribute in some way to someone else. Uh, and for me it felt a little different than how it used to be when I would pray for someone. Um, this felt like I knew that thoughts can be...this is my belief, broadcast...our thoughts can be broadcast to another person and so we were guided in doing that um, broadcasting our thoughts, which is another way of helping other people. [So...so you believe that when you think...when you wish well for other human beings when you concentrate those feelings of well-being towards others that it has direct effect on their well-being.]

About a year ago when there did not seem to be any specific tragedy that made news, our teacher guided a meditation that went like this:

“Let us send Loving-Kindness to ALL people everywhere north of us,

Let us send Loving-Kindness to ALL people everywhere south of us,

Let us send Loving-Kindness to ALL people everywhere east of us,

Let us send Loving-Kindness to ALL people everywhere west of us,

Let us send Loving-Kindness to ALL people everywhere.”

As Bhante was saying the meditation I felt a great sense of relief. My body was more relaxed. My legs became less tense so that sitting on the cushion for an hour was more doable. My shoulders relaxed and it was easier to sit in an upright position without feeling like I needed to push myself to stay in the sitting position. My hands in my lap became less rigid. I was able to keep a posture of attentativeness rather than stiffness. I also felt a great deal of joy...no more regrets

[Do you think you could describe this feeling of joy?]

Well first, it my relaxed body allowed joy to come up. [Aha]. And um, well the joy was that I was able to do something uh, are you not so much what I was able to do, but how I felt? [Ya, ya, the feeling of joy...I was wondering if you could expand a little bit] kind of relaxed happiness within myself. Happiness meaning, um, gratitude, ya...ya. And awareness I think of what had just transpired by his guiding us in that so, that also. [So in a sense there was kind of an emersion in the experienced that made your body more relaxed and the joy...you felt the joy come up and there was something about that experience that made you feel happy]. Yes.

I also felt a great deal of joy...no more regrets in not sending contributions on a regular basis but knowing that I could send Loving-Kindness each day. I recognized that my Loving-Kindness sent to others was helping them as well as helping me. A great and important lesson was mine for that day and for the days since that meditation. *So I guess that last sentence didn't reflect what I felt but I just naturally put it there [What's peculiar about uh expressing the importance of it?] because there I was talking more about what it did for me. [Mhm. To me the last sentence seems like a natural conclusion. You are wrapping up your thoughts and saying that this was a great experience. So...um to me it seemed like it fit. You said that for you it didn't fit?] It did feel like it fit when I wrote it, but as we talked I began to think that it's not about ...um...the results that I got but (pause) more about um what the Loving-Kindness...the possibilities of Loving-Kindness. I guess that is a part that fits. [That's one of the possibilities right (chuckle)?] Yes that's right.*

Second Request

Please describe a situation in which you became angry in everyday life and found that Loving-Kindness meditation helped you handle that situation. Note that, unlike the first request, I am not talking about an experience in formal meditation, but in everyday life. Tell me what was going on 1) before you became angry, 2) how you became angry, 3) what you experienced when you became angry, 4) and what happened after that? How did Loving-Kindness meditation affect your experience and behavior during this particular incident? Please take the time to bring this experience vividly to life.

About a year after my husband died, a friend invited me to join her in attending a women's group that met once a month for lunch. I was still in the process of grieving and dealing with a big lifestyle change so it seemed that it would be a positive move for me to become more involved outside of my own issues. *[Can you say something more about this uh this sense or desire to want to be involved um...outside of your own issues] Um (pause) I guess I just knew that it was time for me to get outside of of the grieving uh that I you know the lifestyle change and the grieving and that I needed to reach out and to be with other people more, so...ya. [So you were going through a difficult period because uh you were still grieving for your husband] When there is a death with somebody so close...your...your life changes at every level and it was um...there was some financial...but there was more like my life is so different now. And so um and it's not going to go back to what it was so I better start thinking about this new or different life I had and this seemed like an opportunity to start to do that. [So you kind of wanted to come out of your shell a little bit] I didn't feel like it but I knew it was something that I needed to do. [If you don't mind me asking, how long were you married to your husband?] I was married 49 years. [Wow that is a long time] it is a long time.*

The friend who asked me to join was someone who I knew for a few years and used to attend women's interest meetings with me in the community. I knew that we did not have the same religious or spiritual practices although I did adhere to her beliefs earlier in my life. I knew that her style of religious practices was not for me at this time. *Um I think throughout my life and when I was married to my husband except the last few years, we went to a um...a mainline Christian church. I grew up that way. [Mainline protestant or is mainline a denomination?] Protestant. So then I began to feel like uh...that way of practicing religion or practicing spirituality was to expect that someone else would save us or um take care of us and ...that started to really make me uncomfortable. I began to feel like I had been given everything that I needed to take care of myself and to so I decided to save myself. A part of it was um that I had the feeling and I think was probably true that if you are not in a mainline...religion, you probably know about this... you can be ostracized and judged...ya...so I felt like I was the only one in this group who wasn't a part of that group. I didn't want (chuckles) I wasn't ready yet to come out and say "this isn't for me (chuckle)" [(chuckle)]*

The format of the meetings was to have lunch and then have a time of "sharing." Each person was expected to talk about the events in her life and to ask for prayers for the problems they were dealing with. *So um when I (pause) when people were asking for everyone to pray that Jesus would take care of them...it...what can I say...it...it didn't work for me and I didn't have ...I didn't want to say to them...I don't want this...it just didn't work. I just sat there. [Ok, so you just kind of let it slide so to speak] Yes I did. Some women let it pass and for most part and did not ask for prayers. Sometimes they would talk about marriages of their grandchildren or illness in other family members. I found this part difficult to talk about because I was still at a place of sadness but most of all I did not want to prolong my grieving by talking about it. And I must say that in that I...it wasn't that I didn't want to talk about...but it wasn't the place that I wanted to talk about it. [You didn't feel comfortable enough to share in that particular situation] And I talked to um other people who uh gave me support and understanding so...*

Well, um, a little history. Um I stayed with my grandmother summers when I was a young girl. And she was very much in the mainline group of religious teachings and um...so she told me that every time I use the bathroom, I needed to read from the bible and I did that. I was comfortable with that, but then I realized that she was doing some things I didn't like. She was pretty judgmental about Catholics...about anybody who didn't belong to her church or anybody who wasn't of her political persuasion. I loved her. She was a great person. That was a background that made me aware of judging.

A year after beginning the group I wanted to go to Sedona so I invited my friend and another friend to accompany us. It seemed like a good match for enjoying the area together. We did some sightseeing, swimming and a little hiking. Then one evening as we sat around the living room chatting, the topic came to religious beliefs. The third person in the party made some strong statements against my friend's religious beliefs and practices. Without thinking of what I wanted to say I blurted out a full agreement with the other person against my friend. *There must have been a dialogue between the two of them. And then, the other friend came down really hard. She said you know...this is bullshit to me and I don't want any part of it. I pretty much said ok! It was not a fair deal (chuckle). Well for me, that's like a triangle which can cause all kinds of problems and it was doing that. Because if it*

had been just me and someone else, it wouldn't have been that bad. [So I'm wondering if this kind of blurting out was a chance for you to express what you really feel instead of just having to sit down and put up with something]. Absolutely...absolutely...because I had an ally there too (both laugh).

After the return to the monthly group I was very aware that my friend had used such statements regarding difficult people in her life such as her daughter's brother-in-law, her wayward son, and her ex-husband as "the lowest piece of humanity." [So what's it like for you to hear someone described as the "lowest piece of humanity?"] *Really ticked me off. It was like hey (laughs) look what you're doing to yourself first of all when she described somebody very close to her in that way. And then I began to think...If you're spirituality is so great (pause) why are you doing that?*

I felt a great attitude shift in myself...mainly because I thought I would be listed in her thinking as one of these "lowest pieces of humanity I was angry with her because she came off as being very self-righteous. I felt stiff with shoulders pulled forward and arms crossed in front of me. I felt that I wanted to withdraw from her and not to be around her. I found myself not wanting to go to the meetings....finding any reason not to go.

About this time we used the Loving-Kindness meditation at meditation center. We were practicing using the meditation for ourselves, which was hard for me. I wanted to by-pass that place but continued to do it for myself. Some interesting things began to happen...I could think more kindly of myself when I made a mistake...like saying something sharp to a family member, or going too fast in a 55 mph zone, or "hogging" a lane when I was swimming.

It felt like a great relief. I didn't have to be perfect and I would continue to make mistakes, some more costly than those listed above. I think that's really important that when we focus on our mistakes, that's where we are living well, that's where we're focusing. I could even forgive myself for endorsing the statements of the third person at the Sedona vacation against my friend. I could also decide that if someone viewed me as a "lowest piece of humanity" that it didn't have to apply to me unless I allowed it to.

The time came when I knew it was time to say a Loving-Kindness meditation for my friend. Nothing much changed at the meeting. My friend continued to use her descriptions of people in her life who caused her grief and shortly after make a commitment to pray for others who ask for prayers. It was all stuff that "ticked me off" and angered me. I felt tight and withdrawn. In the next weeks some real insights about myself came forward. I was becoming aware of how much I was judging her in her descriptions of people in her life, and perhaps me as well, realizing that I was doing the same things in my thinking as she was doing, only in a different way. Also I was aware that I did not want to disclose to her or other people my form of spirituality for fear of being ostracized by others and not fitting in.

I was becoming aware how much the Loving-Kindness meditation for myself was like purifying myself. [Purifying yourself of what?] From these um...attitudes and judgments that I have carried with me and not known...[Jane was] not realizing how they affected me in a negative way and how knowing that to be aware of them and to let them pass by...those thoughts

*to pass by, is a way of purifying myself from making judgments on others. So the judgments on others are more hurtful to me than they are to someone else. **Oh what a relief for this awareness! It made me take a real look at myself and how I had contributed to our strained relationship and my anger with her*** [Can you expand on the sense of relief a little bit?] *I felt relaxed. I felt like um my body was more relaxed. I wasn't sitting like this at the meetings (shows tense posture) which, you know, is good control when you can put your arms in front of you.*

I felt more relaxed and light like I was not carrying around a bag of bricks on my shoulders. It took some more months of doing this before things started to change. It started with my attitude of recognizing that I was judging when my friend spoke. I was aware but I just told those thoughts that I did not want to judge another person anymore and that they could move on. I felt less closed in, fewer times that I found myself with arms crossed in from me so as to be in big control. I was still able to monitor my thoughts and be aware of my breathing and the ability to relax. I continued to be attentive to my friend when she spoke and made friendly comments. We laughed about funny things that happened in our lives and spent less time dwelling on problems. This has been difficult to write as I realized how much I was influenced by my anger toward my friend and had never realized I could do anything about it. The wonderful thing about writing it was that I can now see how doing loving-kindness meditation affects the person who does it as well as those to whom it is directed. I can say that Loving-Kindness meditation is a practice that is very worthwhile and that I have the intention to continue to practice for the rest of my life.

Appendix E: Data Analysis Tables for Each Participant

Arvind

#	Meaning Unit	First Transformation	Second transformation	Situated Theme
1	<p>This is my personal experience. One of my close friends asked some of money from me. [Ok can you say something about your relationship with this friend?]</p> <p><i>I know him very well and he's a Bengali friend and so he was in <u>terrible situation financially</u> when I met him....met her. And actually then I she...she committed sometimes...sometimes <u>she wanted to ...committed suicide.</u></i></p>	<p>Arvind tells of his personal experience. One of his close friends in Bangladesh was in a terrible financial situation when he met her. Her situation was so bad that sometimes she wanted to commit suicide</p>	<p>After moving to the US to practice being a monk, a friend from back home contacted Arvind in order to seek help for her <u>terrible financial situation</u>. Her husband was out of work and her children were miserable. <u>Her condition was so bad that she was talking about suicide.</u></p>	<p>After moving to the US to practice as a monk, Arvind learned that one of his friends from back home was in such dire financial need that she was thinking about suicide.</p>
2	<p><i>Um then I told her I'm <u>so sorry I have to help her.</u> That's why I um gave...<u>gave her actually all of the money</u> that I had at that moment and [all of your money?] <u>all of money</u>, [ok go ahead].</i></p>	<p>Arvind told her that he was so sorry about her circumstance and felt that he had to help her. He actually gave her all of the money he had at the time</p>	<p>Arvind felt <u>so sorry</u> for her condition and felt strongly compelled <u>to help her</u>, to the extent that he gave her <u>all the money</u> that he had at the time.</p>	<p>He felt so sorry for his friend that he decided to give her all of the money that he had saved up.</p>
3	<p><i>But I trust her very well because I thought she will become...so...you know she will run a business and she will...<u>because I give some hints to start a business and this kind of business will ah help you and I can help you finding some other um...business people from outside the country and also you do</u></i></p>	<p>He trusted her to use the money to start a business, and he gave her some hints about how to do that. He told her that he could find some business people from outside the country to help her establish a business.</p>	<p>Driven by his deep sympathy and his trust for her, he didn't even ask for a written agreement, but simply told her that she had to <u>give it back</u> at some point. <u>He gave her some</u></p>	<p>Arvind gave her some hints about how to start a business in the hope that she would invest the money wisely and eventually pay him back.</p>

	<p><i>something very good and you can become well and <u>also you can treat your children...and they have a very misery condition at the moment and her husband is not working. You are in a very very...um bad situation, so I can give some but you have to give it back...give it to me back. That's what the uh situation was.</u></i></p>	<p>Arvind wanted to help her children as well who were in a miserable condition at that moment, and her husband wasn't working either. He understood that she was in a bad situation and assumed that she would give his money back.</p>	<p><u>hints about how to start a business</u> assumed that she would use his money wisely by creating a source of income so that she could <u>give it back</u>. He gently urged her towards investing the money fully expecting that she would comply.</p>	
4	<p>Then I gave but she <u>didn't sign any legal document</u>.</p>	<p>Arvind gave all his money to the friend in need and she didn't sign any legal document.</p>	<p>Arvind waited for a year before he asked for his money back. He trusted her so much to the extent that hadn't asked her to <u>sign any legal document</u>.</p>	<p>His trust for her was so deep that he never asked her to sign any legal documentation.</p>
5	<p>Later when I asked about money, <u>he just ignore me and said this and that.</u> [ok can you explain what happened]</p> <p><i>Ya when she didn't answer the phone sometimes. If answer then she says...mmm why you are making trouble making, making disturbed me. Why you are disturbing I did this and that why you asking money now. I don't have money I don't have I'll give it later I don't have I don't know. That's what he said. [This and that?] That means she would get really angry. She thought that I am disturbing her and she thought that I am doing something very bad to her. Ask him money. [Ok so this and that means that you're...you're disturbing her?] Yes</i></p>	<p>One year Later when he asked her about the money, she just ignored him for a while by not answering his calls. When she finally answered, she would get angry and ask him why he was making trouble for her and why he was disturbing her.</p>	<p>In the meantime he had tried to give her some direction about how to invest the money but to no avail. When he finally asked for the money, she initially <u>ignored</u> his phone calls. When she finally pick up the phone, she accused him of <u>making trouble</u> and disturbing her. She also tried to placate him by telling him that she would <u>give it later</u>. Arvind was expecting that she would follow his advice and the she would be sincere as she seemed to him before he gave her</p>	<p>But this trust began to erode when she would ignore his calls and tell him she would repay him later, going as far as to tell him that he is harassing her and that he should leave her alone.</p>

			his money. Her attitude completely shifted however and she started acting entitled to the money.	
6	<p><i>She thought at the beginning she is not financially in a good situation. After she got the money from me she thought that <u>that money belongs to her</u>. She told ...she felt the ownership for that...she didn't commit to um....run a business properly and....um....become more rich person and become ...do his or her own things properly. Instead of that she thought ok <u>I have to grab all the money and keep it with me</u>.</i></p>	<p>In the beginning, Arvind's friend thought that she was not in a good financial situation. After she got the money from him she thought that the money belongs to her. She felt that she didn't have to commit to running a business properly or to become a richer person in order to return the loan. Instead she thought that she should grab all the money and keep it with her.</p>	<p>A struggle begins to take place between Arvind and his friend, and he begins to doubt her intentions. Arvind believes that she <u>grabbed</u> all the money and thought that <u>it belongs to her</u>. What she should have done was to invest the money in order to earn some income and be able to pay him back.</p>	<p>Arvind believes that his friend thinks that his money belongs to her; she acts entitled to it.</p>
7	<p><i>But...um several times I explained that is not the way. You can earn some money and you can return it then if you can do that that is <u>the best way</u> because I trust you. I don't have any legal documents with your. <u>So it is your duty</u> and...it is your ...because you're in a real bad situation that's why I help you. I explain her but she said all the time "no I have done this...I don't have money at the moment I have started a business so um...I don't have.</i></p>	<p>Arvind tried to explain to her that that is not the way. She could have earned some money and that way she could return it. That is the best way to go about things because he trusted her to give his money back. He didn't have any legal documents and it was her duty to return his money. She was in a bad situation and that's why he helped her. Arvind tried to explain this to her but she would say that she didn't have the money, or that she started a business.</p>	<p>No matter how many times Arvind tried to explain this to her and to convince her that this is <u>the best way</u>, she ignored him. He implored her by reminding her that he gave her the money in a time of need, and that he trusted with all his money in the hope that she would give his money back someday.</p>	<p>Reminding her of his kindness to her and of her duty to pay him back did not help.</p>

8	<p><i>That's what ya...It looks like a very um...<u>sometimes it looks like arrogant</u>. Most of the time she didn't answer the phone. When I asked money she didn't answer the phone. [How long did you wait between you gave her the money until you ask her to return it?] One year. May I read? [Mhm].</i></p>	<p>Sometimes she looked arrogant. Most of the time she didn't answer the phone. When he would ask her for the money, she didn't answer the phone.</p>	<p>His friend responded by delaying her responses and <u>acting arrogantly</u>, thus further aggravating him.</p>	<p>Arvind interpreted her actions as arrogant.</p>
9	<p><u>Then I got so angry, it was unbearable situation in my life</u> [can you say something more about unbearable situation?] <i>I felt so heavy myself. I had a lot of anger, frustration.</i></p>	<p>Arvind became so angry that the anger created an unbearable situation in his life. He felt very heavy and had a lot of anger and frustration.</p>	<p>When Arvind started realizing that he wasn't going to get his money back, <u>he got so angry</u> that the burden of his anger created an <u>unbearable situation in his life</u>.</p>	<p>Arvind's anger reached its zenith and become so burdensome.</p>
10	<p><i>Why did I do this?...this kind of (pause) they don't really see... She didn't really understand uh this that's <u>why she did this?</u></i></p>	<p>Why did she do this? She doesn't see or understand what she is doing to him.</p>	<p>Arvind rage filled him with questions about his own motivations and her motivations. <u>Why did I do this?</u> Why did I give her the money? Why did she do this? How could she do this? How could she take his money if she had no intention of returning it?</p>	<p>His mind was filled with questions about the situation: Why did he lend her the money and why did she take his money if she had no intention of returning it?</p>
11	<p><i>I could...anger...I don't know what...that is the anger....I had anger....I want to do something bad for her. That means just <u>destroy the business or destroy the reputation</u> and ...and <u>tell to other people she she did something real bad for me and this is what I felt</u>. [ok, go ahead and read] Sometimes I thought that I want to do something so bad for her.</i></p>	<p>His anger got to the point where he wanted to do something bad to her. That means to just destroy her reputation by telling other people that she did this very bad thing to him. Sometimes he thought that it would even be better to kill her.</p>	<p>He started writhing in his anger: <u>why did she do this?</u> How could she do this? He wanted to act out and do something bad to her like <u>destroy her reputation</u> or <u>even that it is better to kill her</u>. His image of her has now</p>	<p>Arvind anger escalated to the point of fantasizing about destroying her reputation or even killing her.</p>

	<u>so bad actually sometime I thought that it is better to kill</u>		completely transformed from a benevolent trustworthy person into a malicious aggressor worthy of death.	
1 2	[So you were deeply injured]. <u>Yes deeply injured by...ya. I thought this is not the way to solve this issue. Actually sometimes I talk with my friends about this situation. Um and also I thought "what I am before that actually before I started practicing Loving-Kindness?" So uh (pause) I thought actually why I ...don't use another way of approach to this.</u>	Arvind was deeply injured by this situation. He started thinking that becoming angry is not the way to solve this issue. Sometimes he would talk to his friends about the situation. Then the thought occurred to him: "what I am before I started practicing Loving-Kindness?" So he thought why doesn't he use another way to approach this?	Realizing the extent of his reaction, <u>he started wondering about what was becoming of him?</u> He started asking Arvind understood that becoming enraged was not the <u>way to solve the issue</u> . So he decided to consult some of his friends hoping for a fresh perspective. By realizing the nature of his experience, namely that of suffering from anger, he decided to <u>use another way to approach this problem</u> .	Arvind is gaining awareness that he is hurt, and that what he is doing isn't working, and that there must be some other way.
1 3	<u>One thing...she is spend all the money. I had to understand that anyhow it has gone.</u>	One thing is true, that she spent all the money. He had to understand that anyhow the money is gone.	Arvind was beginning to accept the reality that his money <u>is gone</u> and that he probably won't get it back.	He found himself forced to acknowledge that his money is gone and that he probably won't get it back.
1 4	<u>Sometimes there are might be some mismanagement it is her issue it is not my mistake. But I have done something good uh I did it in very very mmm in a benign way I did that but at the</u>	Sometimes there is mismanagement on her part and that is her issue and not his mistake. He did something benign and	He also realized that losing the money was <u>not his mistake</u> , suggesting that Arvind partially blamed himself. He did something good	Arvind reminded himself that he did something good by giving this woman his money, and realized that it is not his fault that

	<i>moment I I am already frustrated and I don't have money so I am having anger.</i>	good when he gave her his money.	when he gave her the money.	she is mismanaging his money.
1 5	<i>Then I thought: ok, I have lost not only this money I have lost lost so many things in my life...<u>why I am worried about only this particular situation.</u></i>	Arvind then thought to himself: "ok, I have lost not only this money but I have lost so many things in my life. Why am I worried about only this particular situation?"	Gaining further perspective, Arvind reminded himself that he has lost many things in his life, so why should he be fixated on the <u>loss in this particular situation.</u> He was realizing that he was obsessing about the situation.	He began to ask himself: given that I have suffered many losses in my life, why am I fixated on this particular situation?
1 6	<i>So I just thought, ok, I mmm...I....what I did what I did lit the candle and look at the candle and sit on the cushion and I thought...I just thought...I <u>just forgive her.</u></i>	Arvind decided to light a candle, sit on his cushion, and told himself to just forgive her.	Arvind decided to start his practice of LKM. He lit a candle and told himself <u>to forgive her.</u>	Arvind decides to practice Loving-Kindness meditation for his friend in order to forgive her (8).
1 7	<i>May same as light brighten here and now may she be able to gain <u>the wisdom and the intelligence and the knowledge and the wisdom to to understand this situation.</u> I'm not going behind her and disturb her. I just bless her <u>may you be able to solve this problem.</u></i>	He expressed the wish "may the same light that is bright here and now allow her do gain the wisdom and knowledge and intelligence to understand the situation." He decided not to disturb her. He just blessed her and wished that she may be able to solve her financial problems.	He also wished her well and prayed that she may gain <u>the wisdom to solve the problem</u> of her difficult financial circumstances. Arvind regained awareness of her suffering. She exercised poor judgment and will continue to suffer financially because of her poor judgment. He prayed that she may gain the wisdom to	Arvind comes to the understanding that his friend's financial irresponsibility is what caused her to need help in the first place, so he wishes that she overcomes this problem.

			overcome this source of suffering.	
18	<p><i>I don't want to <u>involve to their trend</u> to pollute myself. That's why I thought I don't want to pollute in the middle. I just do something <u>totally different</u> that is I am thinking about me you be able to gain the wisdom. May you be able to gain the good way of thinking. Then you will understand real situation. You...you will not do something bad for me and bad for you. That's what I thought.</i></p>	<p>Arvind did not want to involve himself in her trend and pollute himself. He also didn't want to pollute the middle after doing good at the beginning. So Arvind decided to do something totally different and thought "May you be able to gain the wisdom. May you be able to gain the good way of thinking. Then you will understand the real situation. You will not do something bad for me and bad for you."</p>	<p>Arvind realizes that by being angry, he is getting <u>involved in her trend</u>, namely thinking selfishly and unwisely. Instead, he wanted to do something <u>totally different</u> by continuing to wish her well-being and wisdom. He also started thinking about their mutual well-being by wishing that she <u>doesn't do anything bad for her or bad for him</u>.</p>	<p>Arvind gained distance from his anger by realizing that he was participating in her way of thinking and decided to wish himself and herself mutual well-being.</p>
19	<p>[Can you say a little more?...It seems that there was a dramatic shift from this very intense anger...]</p> <p><i>Actually because I was thinking I need to go there...I <u>need to buy a ticket and go right away there and talk her</u>.</i></p>	<p>Arvind was thinking of going there to confront his friend. He needed to buy a ticket and go right away and talk to her.</p>	<p>Arvind's struggle continues. He was still entertaining thoughts of confronting his friend. He wanted to fly over there and confront her. He even thought about hitting her or doing something else.</p>	<p>Arvind entertains the idea to fly home and confront his friend as his struggle against acting out continues.</p>
20	<p><i>Then I thought "<u>Why I am doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her?</u>" If I do that, I will do something wrong really wrong. I will hit her, I'll do something bad and is that ok? It's not good.</i></p>	<p>Then he thought to himself "Why am I doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her?" If he does this he will do something really wrong. He will hit her or do something else that is bad. Is that ok? It's not good.</p>	<p>But then he managed to step back and ask himself: "<u>why am I doing that? Can I quickly find an answer by going there and talking to her? I'll do something bad; is that ok?</u>"</p>	<p>He is again able to stop by asking himself whether flying there would achieve anything.</p>

2 1	<p><i>So I postponed buying ticket and then I thought...no I don't want to. It is...it is a long process of..uh..uh thinking <u>struggling in my mind</u> and finally I thought I have to think the light...the candle light is brighten...is giving the light and uh, the darkness go away. Same way, may she be able to gain the light into her life and solve the problem...and I don't want to um <u>blow my light in my heart</u>. [Ok, continue].</i></p>	<p>So he postponed buying the ticket and then he thought that he doesn't want to go. After a long process of thinking and struggling in his mind, he finally thought that he has to think of the light...the candle light is brightening, is giving light and the darkness is going away. He also wished: may she be able to gain the light into her life and solve her problem. Arvind doesn't want to blow out the light in his heart either.</p>	<p>Finally he thought that he must let the light of the candle brighten his life and hers. Most importantly, <u>he doesn't want the light in his own heart to blow away.</u></p>	<p>Arvind refocused on the darkness (and suffering) in his heart and wished it away through his practice using the candle.</p>
2 2	<p>Finally I told this is not the way. <u>If she wants give it to me, she will give,</u></p>	<p>Finally he fully realized that this is not the way. If she wants to give the money to him she will give it back.</p>	<p>Arvind comes to the important realization that he can't force her to give his money back. <u>If she wants to give him the money then she will give it back.</u> Otherwise he can't force her hand.</p>	<p>Arvind realizes one of the limitations of his power, namely that he can't force his friend to pay him back.</p>
2 3	<p>But I do not want to harbor hatred in my mind and pollute my mind. I started to practice Loving-Kindness for myself and for her.</p> <p>[so what was it like for you after you decided um that you don't want to pollute your mind with hatred...] because when I have hatred...anger...<i><u>I feel so much of anger and hate frustration all sort of bad things, I blow up myself and become so emotional and I</u></i></p>	<p>But he does not want to harbor any hatred in his mind and pollute it. He started to practice Loving-Kindness for both of them. Arvind realized that when he feels so much anger and hate and frustration and all sorts of bad things, then he blows himself up and becomes so emotional. He thinks that it is really hard to bear in his mind and in his heart. It is</p>	<p>Arvind finally resolves to end the hatred in his mind by practicing Loving-Kindness meditation. He felt <u>so much anger and hatred and frustration and became so emotional. He started to think that it's really hard to bear all these things in his heart. He realized the</u></p>	<p>Arvind deepens the realization that his hatred is a tremendous burden on him and decides to lighten the burden by practicing Loving-Kindness for himself and his friend.</p>

	<p><u>think ...I think ...it is really hard to bare in my mind in my heart. It is heavy...I thought this is heavy I don't want this. I can't bear this. I don't want either. I can't...that is what I thought...I don't want that of solution I don't want. It is so easy to just relax and send the blessing Loving-Kindness to her and also send Loving-Kindness to myself.</u></p>	<p>much easier to just relax and send the blessing of Loving-Kindness to her and to himself.</p>	<p><u>extent of suffering that his own anger and hate and frustration were inflicting on him.</u> It is so much less burdensome <u>to just relax and send the blessing of Loving-Kindness to himself and herself.</u></p>	
2 4	<p>[What was it like for you to send Loving-Kindness to her?] <u>Actually when I am sending the Loving-Kindness I felt I visualized that she become so nice and having a beautiful smile and her face and she's trying really hard ...trying to solve the problem not to escape from the problem. That's what I felt. I felt so happy...oh it's nice...why I am do something bad? I felt that happiness in my mind too.</u></p>	<p>When Arvind was sending Loving-Kindness to his friend, he visualized that she became so nice and had a beautiful smile on her face. She was trying really hard to solve the problem and not to escape form the problem. He felt so happy and thought to himself: "oh it's nice, why do I want to do something bad?" He felt that happiness in his mind. His image of his friend changed.</p>	<p>Arvind was intentionally bringing a positive image of his friend to mind. <u>He imagined her with a beautiful smile, and she was also trying to solve the problem by giving him his money back.</u> Doing so gave him a nice feeling in his mind and body and he wondered to himself why he wanted to do something bad in the first place. In other words practicing Loving-Kindness changed his state of mind so dramatically that he was surprised by the severity of his hatred and the extent to which holding on to it was hurting him.</p>	<p>Visualizing his friend as friendly and well intentioned brought Arvind great relief. (Another shift in ambivalence. First it was mostly good then all bad and now it's back to somewhat good).</p>
2 5	<p>[So in a way <u>your image of her changed when you</u></p>	<p>Arvind's image of his friend changed.</p>	<p>Arvind's new realizations enabled him to think well of his</p>	<p>The fact that Arvind could visualize his friend as happy and well-</p>

	<p><u>practiced?</u>] Yes, in practice her image also change.</p> <p>[go ahead]</p>		<p>friend again to the extent that <u>his image of her changed</u> when he practiced Loving-Kindness meditation.</p>	<p>intentioned meant that his ambivalence was easing.</p>
2 6	<p><u>She call me and promised that I'll try my best to give back your money.</u> Few days after after few days she call and she text me and I am in this situation and I am so sorry I'll try my best</p>	<p>Arvind's friend called him and promised him that she'll do her best to give his money back. After she called him, she texted him and said that she is in this situation and that she's so sorry and that she will try her best.</p>	<p>Arvind here presents the final resolution of the conflict with a positive outcome. After doing LKM for her, <u>she called him and promised to do her best to give back his money.</u></p>	<p>Arvind friend's attitude changed as she was no longer acting like it was her money and she promised to return it.</p>
2 7	<p><i>[A]nd at that time actually, what I did...I save some more money and I thought I am not totally depend on the money that I gave ...given. I have to find some other money because that is...<u>this is not the only money in this world</u> (chuckle) I managed to save some more money and um go smoothly in my life. If I give back I can use it. If not ok.</i></p>	<p>At that time, Arvind had saved some money and he thought to himself: "I am not totally dependent on the money that I have given. I have to find some other money because that is not the only money in this world." If he gets it back he can use it, if not then things will be ok.</p>	<p>Arvind also realized that he was fixated on the money he lost to her and forgot that <u>there are other sources of money in this world.</u> If he gets his money back then he can use it. Otherwise he will be OK. His friend is no longer acting like the money is hers, and Arvind has gained the confidence to let go of the money and realize that he will be fine either way.</p>	<p>He also realized that he had saved some money since at that he will be ok if she doesn't return his money.</p>
2 8	<p>[What was it like for you to hear her saying "I'll try my best to give you your money back?"</p> <p><u>Actually I'm not really care about that. I don't trust that time. I don't think that much that she will give me money</u></p>	<p>Arvind doesn't really care about the fact that she told him that she will do her best to return the money. He didn't trust her this time. He doesn't think that she will give him the money because in the past she</p>	<p>Arvind <u>doesn't care</u> that she promised to do her best to return his money. He still doesn't trust her because of their history. However, he has made peace the fact that she is</p>	<p>Although Arvind does not trust that she will return his money, he has found some peace in letting go of the money.</p>

	<p><i>because she has done something in the...at the begging at the middle she has something um...in a bad way...not answer phone calls and trying escape and so I felt neutral feeling. I don't want this if you can it's your duty. But I don't want to um keep hundred percent trust on that. [Ok, and If you don't mind me asking, what happened? Did you ever get your money back?] No.</i></p>	<p>didn't answer his phone calls and she was trying to escape. Hearing her say that she will do her best to give the money back gave him a neutral feeling. Three years later, she still hasn't returned any of his money.</p>	<p>unlikely to ever return his money. His attitude towards the money has fundamentally changed.</p>	
29	<p>[How many years has it been since] <i>now actually almost three years. But now I'm actually I feel two things. One, if she has used that money for their beneficial, I'm happy. If she's has um...if she's used that money for some other gambling or something in ruin their life, I feel so sad.</i></p>	<p>Currently he feels two things. If she used that money for her benefit, then he is happy. If she used that money for something that would ruin their life like gambling, then he will feel so bad.</p>	<p>Before reconciling with her he wanted his money back, but now he simply <u>hopes that she used it for something beneficial. If she did, then he is happy. If he learned that she used it for gambling or for other self-destructive purposes, then he will feel so sad.</u></p>	<p>Having let go of the money, he hopes that his friend will learn to act in her own best interest; if she uses the money to take care of her family then he is happy, but if she uses it for destructive purposes then he will be sad.</p>

Mary

#	Meaning Unit	First Transformation	Second Transformation	Situated Theme
1	<u>There is someone at class. Who always comes in late and shifts and wiggles around and makes noises.</u>	There is someone at Mary's meditation class who comes in late and shifts and wiggles around and makes grunting noises	There was someone in her meditation class who <u>would always come in late</u> and therefore draw attention to herself or himself. Person X also <u>shifts and wiggles and makes grunting noises.</u>	There was someone in Mary's meditation class who would come in late and shift and wiggle and lean too far forward during meditation.
2	[The sense I get from the sentence that there was something about this person's behavior that was disruptive?] <u>I would be very aggravated because they didn't just wiggle, they would do this (leans forward). If someone would be in front of them and they would be this much from their head (gestures with her fingers to indicate a few inches)</u> [On the cushion?] <i>they were on the chair and they kept you</i>	Mary would be very aggravated because they didn't just wiggle. If someone would be in front of this person, then this person would lean forward and be inches from the other's head.	Mary felt <u>very aggravated</u> by this behavior. X would also lean forward to the point of almost touching the person below him or her on the cushion.	X's behaviors, which also included invading people's personal spaces, aggravated Mary.

	<i>know making noises like grunting noises and stuff... [Ok]</i>			
3	<p>I would find myself thinking I am glad I am not that person sitting below them. [What do you imagine the person below them is experiencing?]</p> <p><i>Well um I would...I think they were annoyed too and after a while they would turn around and look. So I think they weren't too happy either.</i></p>	<p>Mary would find herself thinking that she is glad that she is not the person sitting below X. She thinks that the person in front of X was annoyed too because after a while they would turn around and look, indicating that they weren't too happy either.</p>	<p>While observing X's behaviors, Mary found herself thinking that <u>she is glad that she is not the person sitting on the cushion below X</u>. She thinks that <u>the person below X was annoyed too because after a while they would turn around and look</u>. Mary's judgment was collaborated by the annoyance of others.</p>	<p>Person X also annoyed the person in front of them as indicated by the fact that the person in front would turn around and look at X.</p>
4	<p><i>So it was more than me that was being disrupted.</i></p>	<p>It was more than just Mary that was being disrupted.</p>	<p>Mary was aggravated by this behavior because <u>people other than herself were also being disrupted</u>.</p>	<p>Mary evaluated X's behavior during meditation as disruptive.</p>
5	<p><i>But they never say a word like "hey! back away!" or something</i></p>	<p>But this person never said a word to X like "Hey! Back away!"</p>	<p>The person sitting on the cushion below X never said "hey! Back away!" as Mary would have like to have done.</p>	<p>Mary imagined that if she was in place of the person below X, she would tell X to back away.</p>
6	<p>I would get so agitated at them that I would lose my meditation and get angry at their lack of respect. [Can</p>	<p>Mary would get so agitated that she would lose her meditation and get angry at X's lack of respect. She feels that the fact that X</p>	<p>Furthermore, <u>Mary would get so agitated with X that she would lose her focus during mediation and get angry at their lack of respect</u>. It doesn't show respect first of all to be late all the time when the attendees were pretty far into the meditation. Second, X was all over</p>	<p>Mary felt that X disrupted her ability to be a good meditator.</p>

	<p>you say something more about this lack of respect?] <i>Well, I just feel that they're late every time. It doesn't show respect first of all to be late all the time. Like all the time, when we're <u>pretty far into the um and um</u> and then just ah being all over the place and hovering over somebody because I don't know if they weren't comfortable. For me you should keep some type of boundary you know. Cause everybody is there for their own reasons, and someone you don't even know is on top of you. <u>It's like somebody sleeping on you in the airplane</u> (laughs) [laughs].</i></p>	<p>is late every time demonstrates his or her lack of respect for the meditators who arrived on time. They were pretty far into the meditation when X would arrive. For Mary people should keep some type of boundary because it is uncomfortable to have someone you don't know on top of you. It's like somebody sleeping on you in the airplane.</p>	<p>the place and hovering over somebody else and making them uncomfortable. Mary asserts that people should keep some kind of boundary out of respect. She likened X's behavior to <u>somebody sleeping on the passenger besides them on an airplane</u>, indicating intrusiveness and lack of respect for other's personal space.</p>	
7	<p>[It sounds to me...there's something...it sounds like <u>you were kind of interpreting their intentions right?</u> Ya I was kind of you know...<u>cause you make up all</u></p>	<p>Mary acknowledges that she was interpreting X's intentions. She was making up all these stories. At first it was about X</p>	<p>In addition to criticizing X's behavior, Mary was <u>interpreting X's intentions</u>. She acknowledged <u>making up all these stories</u>, meaning that she felt that X's behavior was motivated by disrespect and lack of regard for others. She presumed that X's behaviors were purposeful.</p>	<p>Mary attributed X's behaviors to deliberate disrespect and inconsideration .</p>

	<u>these stories you know like...at first it was about her just you know being annoying.</u>	just being annoying.		
8	<u>I just could only focus on them and how rude I perceived them to be. I find myself even annoyed at them later when we were all having tea!</u> [So you were kind of carrying a grudge]. <i>I didn't want to be around them. If they went that way, I'd go the other way. I was like (gestures by turning her back) I didn't want any part of them.</i>	Mary would only focus on X and how rude she perceived X to be. She found herself even annoyed at X later when the congregation was having tea! She didn't want to be around X. If X went one way, Mary went the other way. She didn't want any part of X.	<u>Mary would only focus on X and how rude she perceived X to be.</u> She was blaming X for his or her behavior and holding on to that sentiment. <u>She found herself even annoyed with X after meditation when they were having tea.</u> X's actions spilled over into tea time after meditation and compelled Mary to avoid X.	Mary focused on X's disruptive behaviors and held on to them after meditation.
9	<u>The last time though I started thinking that I don't know their story.</u>	The last time Mary saw X, she started to think that she doesn't know their story.	Then Mary started thinking differently. <u>The next time she saw X, she started thinking that she didn't know X's story.</u> Her perspective shifted as she realized that her attributions may not be accurate.	Mary experienced a shift in attitude when she realized that she didn't know what X's story was.
10	[How did Loving-Kindness help you in this situation specifically? <i>Well...because um I think it just made me feel more aware no matter how I feel</i>	Loving-kindness meditation helped Mary in this situation by <u>making her feel more aware that no matter how she feels about the other person, they are connected.</u>	Mary believes that Loving-Kindness meditation helped her in this situation by <u>helping her feel more aware that matter how she feels about the other person, they are connected.</u>	Mary explains that Loving-Kindness meditation helps her feel more connected with people.

	<u>about the other person we're connected.</u>			
1 1	<i>If I'm <u>thinking negatively towards them</u>, <u>then it's only gonna come back and affect me</u>, because we're all connected if we like it or not. Which I <u>didn't think until now</u>.</i>	If Mary is thinking negatively towards X, then it's only going to come back and affect her because we're all connected if we like it or not. Mary didn't think about this until this point; what if X has a problem?	This connection comes from the idea that if <u>Mary thinks negatively towards X</u> , then it's <u>only going to affect her</u> . Recognizing this effect changes Mary's attitude towards her judgment of X.	The practical effect of this connection is that her attitudes towards others affect her as well.
1 2	<i>What if they have <u>a problem</u>? I <u>started thinking that maybe there's a good reason</u>. Maybe X <u>had a back condition</u>?</i>	What if X has a problem? Mary started thing that maybe there's a good reason for X's behavior. Maybe X has a back condition?	A new possibility presents itself: <u>what if X has a problem</u> that is causing X to behave in this way? <u>Maybe X has a reason</u> ? Maybe X has a <u>back condition</u> ? Maybe X's actions are driven by necessity instead of ill-intention?	A new possibility for interpreting X's actions presents itself to Mary, namely that X has a physical problem.
1 3	<i>The same for driving. I was <u>such an angry driver</u>. You know so inpatient. I'm <u>trying to think of the other person</u> and I don't know...<u>maybe they're hurt or afraid or whatever that's causing them to be really slow or cut you off or whatever they do wrong</u>.</i>	The same applies for driving. Mary was such an angry driver. She was so inpatient. Now she is trying to think of the other person. Maybe he or she is hurt or afraid or whatever is causing that person to be really slow or cut someone off or whatever they do wrong.	The same realization applies to driving. <u>Mary was such an angry and inpatient driver</u> . <u>Now she's trying to think of the other person</u> . Maybe the person is afraid or hurt or something is causing them to behave the way they do. Mary is learning to put herself in other driver's shoes.	The new possibility presents itself through an act of empathy.
1 4	<u>Maybe it took everything they</u>	Maybe it took everything that X	Mary started listing a variety of possibilities for explaining X's	Even more possibilities

	<u>could do in their power to just get there then, maybe even after a hard day's of work that made them late. And maybe they have back problems that they can't sit still!</u>	could do in his or her power to just get there then. Maybe a hard day's work made X late. Maybe X has back problems and can't sit still.	behavior. <u>Maybe it took everything in X's power to get to meditation when X did?</u> Maybe after a hard day's work made X late? Maybe X has back problems and can't sit still.	present themselves as Mary continues to empathize with X.
1 5	<u>I found myself feeling bad for this person and sending them Loving-Kindness vibrations during meditation. And I was able to meditate alongside them even with their distractions.</u> [So you were able to meditate next to this person in a different...] Ya in a whole different...like it didn't bother me that they were moving. I almost didn't even notice that they were moving.	Mary found herself feeling bad for this person and sending them Loving-Kindness vibrations during meditation. She was even able to meditate alongside them even with the distractions. It didn't even bother her that X was moving. She almost didn't even notice that X was moving.	As her empathy deepened, her negative judgment gave way to compassion. Mary found herself <u>feeling bad for this person and sending X Loving-Kindness vibrations during meditation.</u> She was even able to <u>meditate alongside X even with the distractions.</u> X's actions were no longer motivated by disrespect and therefore Mary was able to relax and largely ignore the shifting and grunting.	The resolution of the process is that Mary learned to meditate beside X without becoming aggravated.
1 6	<i>I even found myself thinking that if I saw them again, I would go say hi.</i>	Mary found herself thinking that if she saw X again, she would go and say hi.	Mary's attitude shift has compelled her to want to meet X, as compared to avoiding X in past meetings.	Mary would like to meet X and chat.

#	Meaning Unit	First Transformation	Second Transformation	Situated Theme
1	<p>Alright, so...umm, let's start on the second part]. My true life experience when I tried to use loving kindness in my life was actually quite recent. I'm in the middle of a very nasty divorce with a very defensive and verbally abusive man (nervous chuckle). [What is it like...what is it like for you to be in the middle of this circumstance...this divorce]. <i>It's <u>horrific</u>, <u>especially when you have two kids</u>, and it's no longer about you, it's about making sure that everything plays out well for them [mhmm] and trying to make the right decisions financially, emotionally, it's just very <u>very overwhelming</u>. And you have to second guess everything you do, <u>you can't say anything that'll make him mad</u>. You don't wanna do anything that will harm the kids. It's <u>it's just a constant back and forth between right and wrong</u>....and it... it's horrible.</i> [it sounds like you are torn in so many directions] <i>mhmm...mmhmm... mmhmm and it's</i></p>	<p>A true life experience when Kerri tried to use loving-kindness happened quit recently. She is in the middle of a very nasty divorce with a very defensive and verbally abusive man. The experience of being in this divorce is horrific, especially since she has two kids and realizes that her life is not about her, but about making sure that everything plays out well for her children. Kerri is trying to make the right decisions financially, and emotionally. The whole experience is just very overwhelming. She feels as though she has to second guess everything she does, and that she can't say anything that will make her husband mad. She also doesn't want to do anything that will harm the kids. Kerri's experience is a constant back and forth between right and wrong and it's horrible. Kerri feels torn in many directions and her life is very unpredictable. She knows what her life is like right now, how she lives and how her kids live, but at any point all that could change. Kerri wonders what the future will be like and she feels that life is just hard.</p>	<p>Kerri is in the <u>middle of a nasty and horrific divorce</u> that she is experiencing with great fear. She fears her husband whom she perceives as <u>defensive and verbally abusive</u>, and she also <u>fears for the future of her two children</u>. Kerri finds herself constantly second guessing her decisions because of her fear of inadvertently acting against their interests. These circumstances have left her feeling emotionally and financially <u>overwhelmed</u>. <u>Stuck in a constant back and forth between right and wrong</u>, Kerri is afraid of saying the wrong thing to her husband because that <u>might make him mad or bring harm to their children</u>. She feels that her future is so <u>unpredictable</u> and out of control. {There is an ambiguity here as to whether she fears that making her husband mad will cause harm to the children or not}. Caught between her fear of her husband and her fear for her children's future, she cannot prioritize her own well-being. What little sense of normalcy she currently has in her life is constantly threatened by the looming divorce. The transitional nature of her life in the middle of this divorce causes her to wonder about what the future brings for her children and for herself.</p>	<p>Kerri is in the middle of a difficult divorce filled with anxiety about defender herself from her husband's aggression and looking out for the well-being of her children.</p>

	<p><i>very <u>unpredictable</u>, I know my life is like....now I know how I live, I know how my kids live, but at any point all that could change, so what will the future be like? So it's it's just hard. [Ya... I can only imagine]</i></p>			
2	<p>[alright so, go ahead and continue] Any conversation that we engage in that <u>doesn't involve our children</u> results in a test of patients for me[um so what ...um ...so it's ...there's a suggestion here it seems to me a kind of an implicit suggestion, that there is something about...um...when you're talking about your children...arguing about your children that makes you feel more patient that with other things] <i>we don't really argue about our children, so that is the one place where there is no....we <u>tend to tackle that equally with compassion</u>. We both want the best for our kids. So that is the only topic we can have a <u>normal conversation</u> about. Anything else seems to be a trigger for</i></p>	<p>Any conversation Kerri and her husband have, that doesn't involve their children, results in a test of patience for her. They don't really argue about their children. That is one place where there is no constant conflict. They tend to tackle the issue of their children's well-being equally with compassion. They both want the best for their kids. It is the only topic that they can have a normal conversation about. Anything else seems to be a trigger for everything else that comes.</p>	<p>Kerri points out that there is one exception to the otherwise <u>constant test of her patience</u> brought about by their arguments. When they talk about the <u>welfare of their children</u>, they both <u>compassionately think about the interests of the children</u>. Though she fears making her husband mad, she still trusts him when it comes to the welfare of their children. Otherwise any conversation that <u>doesn't involve their children</u> triggers everything else that comes, namely the arguing and the verbal abuse.</p>	<p>The only "normal" conversation that Kerri can have with her husband that doesn't test her patience is one that revolves around the well-being of their children.</p>

	everything else that comes. (pause)			
3	<p>Ok, um, huh, <u>he seems to think the louder and more vulgar he becomes, the more likely he is to get his desired outcome</u></p>	<p>Kerri's husband seems to think that the louder and more vulgar he becomes, the more likely he is to get his desired outcome. When her husband shouts at her, Kerri is good at dissociating by going somewhere else.</p>	<p>Kerri describes her interpretation of her husband's usual behavior. <u>He thinks the louder and more vulgar he becomes, the likely he is to get his desire outcome</u>, namely for Kerri to admit that she is wrong and that he is right.</p>	<p>Kerri expresses a sense of outrage, defeat, and futility concerning her husband's attitude.</p>
4	<p>[can you say something about what it's like for you to be in this state where you are being shouted at] <i>for me, I'm pretty good at dissociating (chuckle) so I tend to just go somewhere else (chuckle) so... (pause) I... I usually am able to just stand there and just let him go about his business, and I can just think about something else. But...if I act...I can either take that approach or become very defensive myself and... my...my sole purpose... when I become that way, my sole purpose is just to convince him that I'm not wrong...that no ... this is better...this is...you know, and then I'm always justifying...defendin g...and I take that</i></p>	<p>She is usually able to just stand there and let her husband go about his business while she thinks about something else. She can either take that approach or become very defensive herself. When she does become defensive, her sole purpose is just to convince her husband that she's not wrong, and that her way is better by always justifying and defending. The choice she makes depends on her mood, how angry her husband is, what kind of time frame she has, and if she has enough time to let him stand there and let the situation work itself out. But if the kids have to be at a soccer game then she just has to give in and agree with her husband in order to get them to the soccer game.</p>	<p>During past arguments, Kerri has handled his yelling in one of two ways: one passive and one active. In the passive case, she protected herself by <u>dissociating where she tends to just go somewhere else</u>. In the active case she joined her husband in justifying her side and proving herself right. { the next unit suggest that when she numbs herself, she just "caves in" and says he's right in order to "get it over with"} <u>Kerri's mood, how scared she is, and if the kids have to be somewhere</u> often decides whether she will be passive or active. Especially if she has to leave in order to attend to her children, she is more likely to numb herself, but if she has time, she is more likely to join the battle and defend herself.</p>	<p>Whether Kerri passively weathers her husband's attacks or actively decides to defend herself, the cycle goes on.</p>

	<p>approach...so...um ...it's an...and that all depends on...like <u>The mood I'm in.</u> <u>If I'm scared how</u> <u>angry he is...you</u> <u>know...I don't</u> <u>know...what kind of</u> <u>time frame we have</u> (chuckle.) If I have enough time to let him stand there and work itself out...then it takes a different course, but if I'm, but if the kids have to be at soccer then you just give in and say...ok...whatever ...that's fine...we have to go to soccer. So...does that answer your question? [mhm]</p>			
5	<p><u>I had become very numb to the name calling and put downs, but I am still very emotionally sensitive to other people's anger</u></p>	<p>Kerri has become very numb her husband's name calling and put downs, but she is still very emotionally sensitive to other people's anger.</p>	<p>Further elaborating the context of the argument, Kerri says that <u>she has become very numb to the name calling and the put downs</u>, while simultaneously remaining <u>sensitive to other people's anger</u>. {This apparent contradiction between numbness and sensitivity can be explained in several ways. Perhaps she numbs herself BECAUSE she is so sensitive, like dealing with an open wound by trying to forget about the pain}</p>	<p>Kerri describes a conflicted emotional state that is simultaneously numb and sensitive to other people's anger.</p>
6	<p><u>On this occasion we were standing in the kitchen, the island strategically position between us, and it started.</u></p>	<p>On this occasion, Kerri was standing in the kitchen with the island strategically positioned between herself and her husband when the argument started.</p>	<p>Kerri enters this particular conversation with a sense of fearful anticipation of her husband's loudness and vulgarity. Using a military metaphor, Kerri and her husband <u>strategically position themselves on opposite sides</u></p>	<p>Using a war metaphor to set up the beginning of the argument, Kerri describes the beginning of the battle</p>

			<u>of the island in the kitchen when the argument started.</u>	with her husband (1).
7	<p>[So um, keep going.. go ahead] (clears throat) I was determined in this instance not to cave and agree with him just because my own fears....so in my head I just kept saying "I wish you well, happy, and peaceful" [uh...not to cave?] <i>mhhmm, I don't know, not to crumble (chuckle) not to give in and just say...ok you're right I'm wrong [just to kind of get it over with?] just to kind of get it over with..., ya.</i></p>	<p>Kerri was determined in this instance not to cave in. She did not want to crumble and give in by saying that he is right and she is wrong—simply in order to get the argument over with. So in her head she started reciting “ I wish you well, happy, and peaceful.”</p>	<p>Kerri was determined in this instance <u>not to cave and agree with him because of her own fears</u>. She had grown accustomed to telling him that she is wrong and that he is right in order to end some arguments as soon as possible. Instead, <u>in her head she just kept saying: “I wish you well, happy, and peaceful.”</u> She moved from a passive to an active stance.</p>	<p>Kerri decided not to cave in and respond differently this time by secretly reciting phrases of loving-kindness.</p>
8	<p>So I know that his anger and issues are just symptoms of much deeper pain and suffering, so I thought if I just kept only sending him love and kindness it would defuse the situation. [Let me ask you about this uh...I know that his anger and issues are just a symptom of a much deeper pain and suffering, could you say more]. <i>Well I know, I know he comes from um from,... his family has a history...his parents were divorced; his mom married a man who was not the best man in the world. Then he was</i></p>	<p>Kerri knows that her husband's anger and issues are just symptoms of much deeper pain and suffering. She knows that he comes from a family with a history. His parents were divorced and his mom married a man who was not the best person in the world. Kerri's husband was raised by his grandparents at some point. Currently he is self-employed and the economy has had an impact on him. His brother passed away a couple of years ago. There are issues in his life that are causing him to suffer and it's spilling onto everything else. So Kerri</p>	<p>There are circumstances both in the past and in the present that influenced her husband's state of mind. His anger is only a <u>symptom of deeper pain and suffering that is spilling over onto everything else</u> including Kerri. When he was a child, his parents divorced and his mother married a man who was “not the best man in the world.” This expression is probably a euphemism for him being a poor step-father. The situation at home was so bad that he had to live with his grandparents for some time. Similarly, he suffers from current financial difficulties, and his brother died recently. Recalling her husband's difficulties brings a</p>	<p>Kerri's empathic awareness of the sources of her husband's suffering allows her to gain a certain distance from his yelling and to recall phrases of loving-kindness (Or is it the other way around, namely that reciting the phrases allowed her to become aware of his suffering) .</p>

	<p><i>raised by his grandparents at some point. Currently he's a self-employed builder so the ...he ...the economy is having an impact on him... um...he had a brother pass away a couple of years ago. <u>So there are issues in his life that are causing him to suffer. And it's spilling over onto everything else.</u></i></p>	<p>thought that if she just kept sending him love and kindness, it would defuse the situation.</p>	<p>new dimension to the conflict, namely a more empathic and understanding stance where she can see the source(s) of her husband's suffering, and wish him well in spite of his aggression.</p>	
9	<p><u>So I thought that if I kept on only sending him loving-kindness, it would defuse the situation, although that is probably my way of trying to control things.</u> [uh...it .sounds to me like ... and correct me if I'm wrong...that say I wish you well happy and peaceful made you somehow ...protected you in some way] <u>sure...I used it as a shield I'm sure.</u></p> <p>[So um...did you feel like the "I wish you well happy peaceful" came up spontaneously?] Mhmmm it comes up spontaneously now.</p>	<p>Kerri thought that if she kept on sending her husband loving-kindness, then the loving-kindness would defuse the situation. Although she thinks that using loving-kindness is her way of controlling the situation, she believes that it worked by protecting her as a shield would.</p>	<p>So Kerri thought that <u>if she kept on sending him loving-kindness, then it would defuse the situation.</u> This act is based on Kerri's assumption that what someone in pain really needs is love and kindness. <u>She used loving-kindness like a shield</u> to protect herself from feeling threatened.</p>	<p>Kerri sent her husband loving-kindness in order to defuse the situation and gain a sense of control and feel protected.</p>
10	<p><u>I believe it worked.</u> [you say that although this is probably my way of</p>	<p>Kerri believes that sending her husband loving-kindness worked.</p>	<p>Kerri <u>thinks that it is her responsibility to try to calm her husband down</u>, and that</p>	<p>Kerri's effective new superpower of</p>

	controlling things, I believe it worked, what do you mean by that?] <u>because I still think that it is my responsibility to calm him down, to make him stop yelling. I think now...I just think now that this is my new superpower...to keep him under control</u>	She believes that it was her responsibility to calm him down, to make him stop yelling. She now thinks that loving-kindness is her new superpower to keep her husband under control.	loving-kindness <u>is a superpower to keep him under control.</u> Kerri realized that she has some say in her husband's reactions, and that she could use loving-kindness to mitigate his rage.	loving-kindness works to keep her husband under control.
1 1	[And how would the situation have been different if you hadn't said those phrases] <u>If I didn't have that tool, if I were having this conversation that I was having that day a year ago before I began practice, my natural instinct would have been to say...you are an idiot...in my mind....I hope a boulder falls from the sky and falls on your head....I'd be thinking those kinds of thoughts...instead of wishing him well...I'd be in my mind...I can't believe I married you...why did I do that?...I wouldn't say it out loud, but those kind of thoughts would go through your head.</u>	When Kerri imagined what the situation would have been like a year ago before she began practicing loving-kindness meditation without saying those phrases. If she didn't have the tool of loving-kindness, she would be thinking that her husband is an idiot and hope that a boulder falls from the sky and falls on his head. She would secretly wonder in disbelief why she married him.	Kerri Imagined what kind of thoughts would have gone through her mind before she started her practice. If she didn't have that tool (loving kindness), <u>her natural instinct would have been to say in her mind: "you are an idiot, I hope a boulder falls from thy sky and falls on your head...I can't believe I married you."</u>	When Kerri is enduring her husband's yelling, she wishes bad things upon him and regrets marrying him.
1 2	<u>...[W]hich would keep the anger festering in me and in him andjust keeps the situation</u>	Such thoughts would keep the situation going because she would have the same feelings as her	In contrast, Kerri now believes that such thoughts only <u>keep the situation going.</u> Although she kept these	Kerri's new tool of loving-kindness enables her to

	<p><i>going because now I have the same feelings....even though I don't show them certainly wasn't loving kindness thoughts...certainly was not loving kindness thoughts going through my head (chuckle) so...</i></p>	<p>husband even though she wouldn't show them. Her thoughts would certainly not have been thoughts of loving-kindness.</p>	<p>thoughts to herself, she understood that they still affected the situation.</p>	<p>curb her own aggressive thoughts and thereby avoid fueling her husband's anger by being angry herself.</p>
1 3	<p>[Go ahead] <u>After about forty five minutes of this uncontrollable anger and verbal assault, he actually started to calm down and reflect on his behavior. The situation was no longer about me and about how mad I make him mad, but it was about that actual topic that started the conversation in the first place.</u></p> <p>[You said after that he started to calm down and reflect on his behavior, what gave you that impression?] <i>because he stopped yelling and started....um....eh ...hmmm instead of standing there yelling and screaming at me, he was still pacing back and forth, but it was more a ... I've screwed everything</i></p>	<p>After about forty five minutes of uncontrollable assault, Kerri's husband started to calm down and reflect on his behavior. The situation was no longer about me and about how mad she made him, but about the actual topic that started the conversation in the first place. Kerri was under the impression that he calmed down and started reflecting because he stopped yelling and screaming at her. Instead he was pacing back and forth, blaming himself for screwing everything up, and wondering what is wrong with him. He was no longer yelling and screaming or projecting onto Kerri. He was just looking at himself and his role in the situation. His reaction was not typical at all.</p>	<p><u>After about forty five minutes of uncontrollable assault, Kerri's husband started to calm down and reflect on his behavior. The situation was no longer about me and about how mad she made him, but about the actual topic that started the conversation in the first place.</u> Kerri's husband behavior changed dramatically. He stopped blaming Kerri and started calming down and reflecting on his behavior. Though he was still tense as evidenced by the fact that he was pacing back and forth, it seems that a part of his anger turned against himself. He started blaming himself for screwing everything up. He also started shamefully wondering what was wrong with him. Most importantly, he started <u>reflecting on his role in the situation and would return to the original topic of the conversation</u>, which was of practical concern. Kerri affirmed that this reaction was not at all typical on her husband's part.</p>	<p>After yelling and screaming for forty five minutes, Kerri's husband finally started to calm down and reflect on his own behavior by focusing on the original topic of conversation instead of blaming Kerri for all of his problems .</p>

	<p><i>up, I don't know what's wrong with me, like he was...he was no longer yelling or screaming or <u>projecting onto me</u>...he was just looking at himself... and his role in the whole situation.</i></p> <p>[And was this typical?] <i>No very <u>untypical</u>!.....um...</i></p>			
1 4	<p><i>um...the situation was no longer about me and how I how I mad...and how mad I make him angry, but it was then about the actual topic that started the conversation in the first place.</i> [It sound as if using loving kindness in this situation help contain his anger] <i>! <u>just think normally when you're confronting somebody, or when someone is confronting you, your anger doesn't give them anywhere else to go, but to continue being angry. So for me if felt like if I'm upset, he's just gonna stay upset. So unless I give him something to...unless I reflect I reflect something better back at him...it just...it just doesn't change.</u></i> [So you're kind of breaking the cycle?] Yes</p>	<p>The situation was no longer about Kerri and how she makes her husband mad but also about the actual topic of conversation that was discussed in the first place. Kerri offered her explanation of how using loving-kindness in that situation helped contain her husband's anger. Normally when someone is confronting another or being confronted by another, then this someone's anger does not give the other anywhere to go but to continue being angry. If Kerri is upset then he will stay upset. Unless she reflects something better back, then the situation does not change. Kerri affirmed that doing so breaks the cycle.</p>	<p>Kerri offers her explanation of how using the loving kindness-phrases in this situation helped bring about a different outcome. In the past, she responded by wishing bad things to happen to him or to question why she ever married him. <u>Normally when someone is confronting another or being confronted by another, then this someone's anger does not give the other anywhere to go but to continue being angry. Unless she reflects something better back to him,</u> nothing will change. Reflecting loving-kindness phrases back in her mind does not fuel the fire of his uncontrollable anger, but instead serves to put it out and stop the vicious cycle of anger feeding anger.</p>	<p>Instead of becoming angry herself and therefore feeding her husband's anger, Kerri's Loving-kindness practice empowered Kerri to reflect something better than anger back at her husband.</p>

1 5	<p>Practicing loving kindness just gave me the space I needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain, the situation was able to continue until he was able to look at the situation through better eyes.</p>	<p>Practicing loving-kindness gave Kerri the space that she needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain . The argument was able to continue until Kerri's husband was able to look at the situation through better eyes.</p>	<p><u>The space that she needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on with a loving, non-judgmental mind, instead of reacting out of fear or pain.</u> This non-participation in his anger gave her husband space to <u>calm down and look at the situation through better eyes.</u></p>	<p>Practicing loving-kindness gave Kerri the space to observe her husband's anger without reacting out of fear and pain.</p>
1 6	<p>[I think this further elaborates my last question. I was wondering if you could say something about this ...the phrase, um that " it gave me the space I needed in that moment to step back and watch what was going on] mmhmmm...by using loving kindness <u>I wasn't any longer engaged in the anger and the frustration of the moment. He was still angry and he was still frustrated, but I was not a part of it. It was just here, so I was able to be over here watching his anger, and kind of understanding where he was coming from...but at</u></p>	<p>By using loving-kindness, Kerri was no longer engaged in the anger and frustration of the moment. Her husband was still angry and frustrated, but she was not a part of it. His anger was just there, and she was in another place watching his anger and kind of understanding where he was coming from, but at the same time not participating in his anger. Her husband was affected by her non-participation. Loving-kindness gave Dg an option she didn't have before.</p>	<p><u>She could tolerate and observe his anger while also understanding where it was coming from.</u> He is over there, being angry, and she is over here, not being angry. She felt a heightened sense of autonomy in the face of a powerful pull to act out of fear and pain. She created a safe space to observe, but more importantly to reflect something better back to him, as opposed to reflecting more of the same. <u>She was no longer engaged in the anger and frustration of the moment.</u> Before she began practicing, Kerri felt that her only option was to react emotionally to her husband's provocations. <u>Now she knows something that separates her from that.</u></p>	<p>Kerri also did not participating in his anger, thus avoiding a reactive emotional stance and avoiding fueling his anger.</p>

<p><u>the same time not participating in it.</u></p> <p>[So he had a chance to look at it through better eyes himself. It sound like he was affected by your use here of loving kindness] <u>I think he was affected by my non-participation</u> (chuckle) do you know what I mean? [yes] loving kindness gave me an option I didn't have before. The only choice I had before was to be defensive and reactive and emotional and that's all I knew. <u>But now I know something else that separates me from that.</u></p>			
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Rahul

#	Meaning Unit	First Transformation	Second Transformation	Situated Theme
1	<p>Last year a Buddhist organization in Malaysia requested an article from me for a magazine. They proposed a topic to me. <u>I was very busy with my studies those days. I told them that I would not be able to do this.</u> [Can you tell me about this experience of being busy, what was going on in your life at the time?]</p> <p><i>As I remember, I was...that was an end of semester. I was writing my papers and so it was a really busy time, and of course I have other obligations in the temple too...studies and other things. <u>So it was really a problem with having the time.</u></i> [mhm]</p>	<p>Last year a Buddhist organization in Malaysia requested an article from Rahul for their magazine. He was very busy those days. It was the end of the semester and he was writing papers for school as well as having other obligations in the temple. He told the Buddhist organization that he would not be able to write the article because it was really a problem with having the time.</p>	<p>Rahul received a request from a Buddhist organization in Malaysia to write an article for their magazine. He initially had no intention to do this. This was not a good time for him because he was <u>very busy those days</u> with his various obligations such as writing papers for school and his duties as a monk in the temple. <u>It was really a problem with having the time, and that's why he told them that he would not be able to do this.</u> Being focused on his own priorities, writing this article seemed of a much lower priority than his other obligations. He was probably also imagining that the organization would have no trouble finding someone else to write the article. The magazine could go on as it is without his intervention.</p>	<p>Rahul received a request to write a magazine article but he was much too busy with his own obligations to write it.</p>
2	<p>However, after a month, a lady who coordinated this project approached</p>	<p>However after a month, the lady who coordinated this project</p>	<p>A month after receiving the initial request, Rahul</p>	<p>Rahul changed his mind out of sympathy when</p>

	<p><u>me again and asked me whether I can do it. Since they made this request a number of times, I thought to find some time and write this article.</u> [What compelled you to write the article?]</p> <p><i>One thing is that when they requested a few times I thought that maybe they...they have not been able to find another person to write on this topic and so I thought maybe they need help on that particular topic. So um so I thought if they cannot find anyone, so they still think that I am the one who can help them. I thought ok in that case I will find some time. (pause) then I replied to her that I would send this article</i></p>	<p>approached Rahul again and asked him if he could write the article. Since the organization approached him a number of times, he thought that maybe they were not able to find another person to write on that topic, or that they maybe needed help with that particular topic. Rahul thought that if they couldn't find anyone, then they are hoping that he will be the one to help them. He thought to himself "ok in that case I will find the time." Then he replied to her telling her that he would send the article.</p>	<p>was approached again. <u>Since they made this request a number of times, he thought to find the time to write the article.</u> He changed his mind out of sympathy, imagining that they <u>have not been able to find another person to write on this topic or that they needed help with this specific topic.</u> Rahul decided to find the time to write this article and he emailed the organizer to let her know. He saw himself as doing something good and approaching her and the organization with good intentions as he imagined that they are in need.</p>	<p>he received a number of repeated requests from the same organization.</p>
3	<p><u>Then I replied to her that I would send this article. Just before I started to write this article I sent her an e mail informing her that I started writing this and would send it within two days.</u></p> <p><i>Because the reason that I send them, because I really wanted to make sure that whether they had not found somebody else, or did they really wanted me to write because I was going to spend some time...I really need to know so I sent an email before I started to write it. [In order to make sure whether they really wanted you to write, or whether they were just</i></p>	<p>Then Rahul replied to her telling her that he would send the article. Just before he started to write the article, he sent the organizer an email informing her that he started writing the article and that he would send it within two days. He sent the email because he wanted to make sure that they had not found somebody else to write the article. He was going to spend some time writing it, so he sent the email because he really needed to know beforehand whether the need is still there.</p>	<p>Before starting to write the article, Rahul sent the <u>organizer an email informing her that he started writing this and would send it within two days. He wanted to make sure that they didn't find someone else, and that the need was still there.</u> He had to start writing immediately because the deadline was two days away. He assumed that she would reply promptly because the organization</p>	<p>Rahul emailed the organizer in order to make sure that her organization still needed the article and was expecting a prompt reply he promised to send it in two days.</p>

	trying to find somebody] anybody or whether they have found somebody else, and whether it is necessary that I should really dedicate myself like this. To <u>make sure that still that need is there.</u>		was in need, otherwise he would not have started writing. Rahul was developing a sense of looming uncertainty while taking on additional responsibility with the hope that no time will be wasted.	
4	<u>I did not get any reply from her</u> [How did you feel when you didn't get a reply from her?] <u>Uh a little angry because you know, I was a little scared, maybe she is busy or you know, um (pause) so it's not clear.</u>	Rahul did not get any reply from her. He felt a little angry because he was a little scared that she wouldn't reply. Maybe she is busy? The situation was not clear.	When Rahul <u>did not get any reply</u> from the organizer, he initially gave her the benefit of the doubt. Though He was <u>a little angry because he was a little scared</u> that she may not respond in time to be able to publish his article, he thought to himself that she may be busy or preoccupied by something.	When Rahul did not get a reply he feared that she might not respond in time to publish the article.
5	<u>It's not clear to me so I prefer not to make judgments, you know, uh and I kept that open; Who knows what has happened? Maybe computer broke down, I don't know. So I just keep myself optimistic and just keep on writing.</u>	Since it was not clear, Rahul preferred not to make judgments and kept the possibilities open. Who knows what has happened? Maybe her computer broke down. So he just kept himself optimistic and just kept on writing.	<u>He preferred not to make judgments</u> until he had more information about her circumstances. So he just kept himself optimistic that his article would be published if he wrote it and so he kept on writing. He allowed himself to tolerate the ambiguity of her circumstances and <u>kept that open.</u>	However, Rahul still allowed himself to be optimistic and hope that her lack of response was due to a temporary circumstance.
6	<u>But you know I am not writing all the while when I send the email. I was</u>	Rahul was not exclusively writing the article all the while	Rahul had promised to finish the article in two	Rahul was writing the article while

	<u>doing other things and finding some time slot to finish this.</u>	before and after he sent the email. He was doing other things and finding some time slots to finish the article.	days. During these two days, <u>he was doing other things and finding some time slots to finish</u> the article. His personal investment in the article was still partial and he was thus still protected to some degree from the disappointment that would ensue if his article was not published. The person of the organizer takes a mental back seat as Rahul is preoccupied with all his responsibilities.	working on other things as it was not his top priority.
7	<u>But on the last day, I realized that I haven't finished this, and then I kept writing this in the night, because I promised them that I would send it in two days so this is the last day. I thought that I would be able to finish this within few hours, but it kept going and going and by the time I complete the article, it was 5 am in the morning. I started about nine or ten.</u>	But on the last day, he realized that he hadn't finished enough of the article during the day so he kept writing in the night. He had promised them that he would send the article in two days. Originally, he thought that he would be able to finish the article within a few hours, but the writing kept going and going and by the time he completed the article, it was five am in the morning.	However, as the end of the second day approached, <u>he realized that he hadn't finished</u> enough of the article to be able to submit it on time, so he <u>kept writing this in the night</u> . The writing <u>kept going and going and by the time he completed the article, it was five am in the morning</u> . Having spent so many hours writing the article, he was probably considerably more personally invested in having this article published. He was most likely assuming that the organizer would publish it even	With the article deadline looming, Rahul had to write all night in order to finish the article on time.

			though she hadn't yet replied.	
8	<p>I was happy that I completed this. Then I sent the article through email and went to sleep. After three hours sleep, I woke up and checked my email to make sure whether I have received an email from the lady confirming the receipt of the article.</p> <p>[eh, it sounds like you were anxious to hear back from her] <i>ya because I didn't hear from her too in the beginning. And then just I wanna make sure whether it has gone. I want to make sure that I submitted the article within the days that I promised them, just to double check whether they have received it, whether they can read it, whether they can open it. [there was no communication?]No communication... ya.</i></p>	<p>Rahul was happy to complete the article. He then sent the article through email and went to sleep. There was no communication up to that point. After three hours sleep, he woke up and checked his email to make sure whether he received an email from the lady confirming receipt of the article. He was anxious because he didn't hear from the organizer since he started writing the article and he wanted to make sure whether it has been successfully sent to her or if she was able to read it.</p>	<p>Having sent the article, Rahul went to sleep. He <u>woke up three hours later and checked his email to make sure whether he received an email from the organizer confirming receipt of the article.</u> He was anxious to hear back from her given all the effort he had put in and the looming deadline. He <u>hadn't heard from her since the beginning of writing the article,</u> and he wanted to make sure that she received it and was able to open it. Sleep deprived and anxious to hear back, Rahul was in an facing the possibility that his intense efforts would be in vain.</p>	<p>After completing and sending the article, Rahul woke up three hours later anxious to confirm the receipt of his article.</p>
9	<p>There was an email from her but it said that they do not need the article now because the editing committee had changed the format of the magazine.</p>	<p>There was an email from her but it said that they do not need the article now because the editing committee had changed the format of the magazine.</p>	<p>Rahul fears came true when he received an email from the organizer <u>saying that they do not need the article now because the editing committee had changed the format of the magazine.</u></p>	<p>The organizers responded by telling Rahul that his article would not be published because the editing committee changed the format of the magazine.</p>
10	<p>As soon as I saw this email, I felt really angry. I felt that all the time and energy I spent in the whole night was wasted.</p> <p><i>The whole reason I got angry is because I spent whole night writing this and I felt that now they're</i></p>	<p>As soon as Rahul saw this email, he felt really angry. He felt that all the time and energy he spend the whole night was wasted. The whole reason he got angry is because he spent the whole night writing the</p>	<p>His fears realized, Rahul <u>felt really angry. He felt that the time and energy he spent during the night was wasted</u> and that his efforts were <u>useless.</u></p>	<p>Rahul became angry because he felt that his efforts were wasted and useless.</p>

	<p><i>not going to use the article, and so I felt that you know, my time is wasted, feeling frustration and not ah and and (pause) and also particularly angry with uselessly, I mean my time was wasted, my energy was wasted. That was the main thing.</i></p>	<p>article and felt that since they're not going to use the article, his time and energy were wasted. The main thing was the feeling that his efforts were useless and that his time and energy were wasted. He also felt angry with the lady who coordinated this project. If she had informed him about this a little earlier, he would not have had to work so hard through the night.</p>	<p>The joy he felt earlier for completing the article on time was supplanted by a sense of anger and futility.</p>	
11	<p><u>I felt angry with the lady who coordinated this project. If she informed me this little early, I would not have to work so hard in the night.</u> <i>Also feelings of <u>not being welcome and not being accepted and also kind of losing hope.</u></i></p>	<p>He felt angry at the lady who coordinated the project. If she had informed him a little earlier, he would not have had to work so hard in the night. He also had feelings of not being welcome and not being accepted and losing hope.</p>	<p>Furthermore, <u>he felt angry with the lady who coordinated the project. If she had informed his a little earlier, he would not have had to work so hard through the night.</u> He also had <u>feelings of not being welcome and not being accepted and losing hope.</u> The image of a woman in need of help in order to complete the magazine transformed into an inconsiderate woman who rejected Rahul and rendered his effort wasted. He also felt a sense of disappointment and losing hope.</p>	<p>He was also angry with the organizer who failed to inform him of the changes in time and made him feel rejected and disappointed.</p>
12	<p><u>I started to have many angry thoughts. I talked my friends and told them what happened and how I felt. For a few hours, I was feeling very bad. . I really felt that I...I'm I just felt my suffering, how I suffer and what I'm going through...I</u></p>	<p>Rahul started to have many angry thoughts. He talked to his friends and told them what happened and how he felt. For a few hours, he was feeling very bad. He felt that he was suffering and felt</p>	<p>He continued to have <u>many angry thoughts.</u> The burden of his anger seemed too big to bear alone so he sought out his friends for comfort and consolation. He</p>	<p>As he continued to have angry thoughts, Rahul sought out his friends for comfort.</p>

	<i>could feel that how um heavy that feeling is.</i>	how heavy that feeling is.	also started to gain awareness that he is suffering and <u>how heavy that feeling is</u> . For a few hours he felt very bad.	
13	<u>However, I begin to realize how unhappy I am due to this incident.</u>	However, he began to realize how unhappy he was due to this incident.	He then <u>began to realize how unhappy he was due to the incident.</u>	Rahul began recognizing suffering in himself.
14	<i>After that incident I really felt that you know, <u>that this is not the way</u> I feel, you know, I was still able to feel ah the difference between my normal lived-being and that how I felt how I was feeling in the experience that I was going through then, soI think that I could clearly feel the difference, ya. In the beginning it's angry, my focus is on that lady didn't communicate with me. Then my feeling of frustration, <u>so that's just the initial state</u>. Angry frustration, you are feeling that kind of thing. And then after a while, a few hours you begin realize how it is burdensome, and I slowly you know, I think <u>attention is more shifting to you</u>, and you start to think, how much suffering, how much heaviness, how much burdenness, and how uncomfortable you are. Attention is most certainly shifting to myself. And then when I realize that <u>this uncomfortable, the changes in the body, the changes in the brain, the changes in the heartbeat...everything.</u></i>	After the incident, Rahul really felt that this is not the way. He was able to feel and clearly tell the difference between his normal lived-being and how he felt in the experience that he was going through then. In the beginning, his focus was on the lady not communicating and his feeling of frustration. This was the initial state. After a few hours, he began to realize how his state is burdensome, and his attention was shifting to him. He began to realize how much suffering, how much heaviness, and how much burden and uncomfortable he was. He realized the changes in his body, in his mind, in his heartbeat...everything.	Rahul's <u>initial state</u> was characterized by feelings of angry frustration with the organizer. He was focused on her failure to communicate and his frustration with his wasted efforts. After a few hours he began recognizing <u>changes in his body, in his mind, in his heartbeat...in everything</u> . Rahul felt that <u>this is not the way</u> . Having shifted his <u>attention</u> from the organizer to himself, he could <u>really feel the difference</u> between his usual non-agitated state of mind and his current agitated one. His mind is not filling with self-centered thoughts instead of other-centered thoughts.	Over time his recognition of his own suffering takes center stage and supplants his focus on the organizer.
15	<u>I started to watch my mind and body and realized that I am suffering a lot. When I become aware of these</u>	So he started to watch his mind and body and realize that he is suffering a lot. He also recognized that there is	The process of shifting focus in now deepening as Rahul realizes that he is suffering	As he investigates his body and mind, Rahul recognizes his

	<p>disturbing mental and bodily states, I thought to myself that <u>this is not good for me.</u></p> <p>[Can I ask you about um (pause) you understood that now I am suffering, and this is not good, I need to change it. There seems to be some kind of transition. Um, <u>there is a second burden to me.</u> So I feel like this is not good for me. You know I mean, <u>the people who did those things may not know that I am so angry, and then but, you know, it doesn't matter how they react, but this feeling, this changes that happen in my body and mind is not healthy for me, it's not going to, so I realized that it's not good for me.</u> So</p>	<p>a second burden to him and that it is not good for him. The people who did those things may not know that he is so angry, and it doesn't matter how they react. But the changes in his body and mind are not healthy for him.</p>	<p><u>a lot and that that is not good for him.</u> He also recognizes that his reaction is voluntary and that it adds <u>a second burden to him.</u> His suffering is not purely other-cause but also self-caused. <u>The people who did those things don't know that he is angry and it doesn't matter how they react.</u> Perhaps they would apologize or act differently if they knew he was, but that is just not important. What matters is that the <u>changes in his mind and body are not healthy for him.</u></p>	<p>own contribution to his own suffering.</p>
16	<p><u>Then I watched my angry thoughts about the lady. I realized that I am blaming her all the time in my mind though she lives a thousand miles away. I thought that I should get rid of this suffering state.</u></p>	<p>Rahul watched his angry thoughts about the lady and realized that he is blaming her all the time in his mind even though she lives a thousand miles away. He thought to himself that he should get rid of this state of suffering.</p>	<p>In the spirit of understanding what he is doing to himself, Rahul <u>watched his angry thoughts about the lady.</u> He realized that he is blaming her in his mind for all of his suffering even though <u>she lives a thousand miles away.</u> He is the one who is creating his interpretation of her actions—which is an act of his own mind—and giving her actions the power to cause him to suffer. Rahul now shifts from a passive victim to an active agent by</p>	<p>Having recognized this contribution, he shifts from a passive stance in relation to his suffering to an active stance.</p>

			resolving to <u>get rid of this suffering state.</u>	
17	I decided to bring my practice of <u>loving-kindness to deal with this situation.</u>	So he decided to bring his practice of loving-kindness to deal with this situation.	After he used mindfulness to deepen his understanding of his own suffering, he decided to <u>bring his practice of loving-kindness meditation to deal with this situation.</u> Loving-kindness seemed to be the right course of action since suffering requires care and kindness.	Rahul chose loving-kindness meditation as the method for alleviating his suffering.
18	<u>It was difficult in the beginning</u> [Can you say something about the difficulty in the beginning]. <i>It's really difficult in the beginning because <u>your mind is again draw to the angry thoughts because you realize that she hasn't done a good thing.</u> So...so you try to bring loving kindness, and your mind is uh pulling you, she hasn't done well, so she has done a mistake. So kind of you know taking of the mind back to angry thoughts.</i>	It was difficult in the beginning, because his mind was again drawing to the angry thoughts because he realized that the organizer hasn't done a good thing. He tried to bring loving-kindness but his mind was pulling him by saying "she hasn't done well, so she has done a mistake." So his mind was taking him back to angry thoughts.	<u>It was difficult in the beginning for Rahul to focus on thoughts of loving-kindness because his mind is again and again was drawing him to the angry thoughts.</u> The content of these thoughts centered on the idea that <u>she hasn't done a good thing</u> and that she had <u>made a mistake.</u> In other words, the angry thoughts imply that she deserves reprimand for what she had done.	Wishing well for the organizer was difficult because his mind kept blaming and faulting her.
19	Although it was difficult in the beginning <u>I slowly direct loving-kindness to myself and wish myself to be well, happy and peaceful.</u> <i>So instead of focusing on her, I try to focus on myself, I wish myself, and after. I felt some relief after a while.</i>	Although it was difficult in the beginning, Rahul slowly began directing loving-kindness towards himself and wishing himself to be well, happy, and peaceful. Instead of focusing on the organizer he focused on himself. He felt some relief after a while.	Sending Loving-kindness thoughts towards the organizer was not giving Rahul any relief. So <u>instead of focusing on her, he tried to focus on himself</u> instead. He decided to <u>direct loving-kindness to</u>	When Rahul decided to switch the focus of the loving-kindness practice to himself, he experienced some relief.

			<p>himself and wished himself happy, well, and peaceful. This seemed to work because he felt some relief after a while. Once again he shifts form an other-oriented to a self-oriented stance and it brought him relief.</p>	
20	<p><u>Then my mind was little clear.</u> [Can you say something about your mind being clear?] <u>I finally wish myself wellbeing and happiness...and and then and I stopped you know creating those sort of thoughts, and I also somehow, uh get some release from these uncomfortable feelings, then, so my mind was a little more stable and peaceful without a lot of thoughts.</u></p>	<p>Then his mind was a little clear. He finally wished himself wellbeing and happiness. He stopped creating those sort of angry thoughts and was able somehow to release himself from those uncomfortable feelings. His mind was a little more stable and peaceful without a lot of thoughts.</p>	<p>Rahul <u>mind was a little more clear.</u> He was initially struggling to genuinely feel the wishes of loving-kindness for himself and was blocked from being able to deeply feel the wishes of wellbeing for himself. Perhaps the easing of the feelings of <u>not being welcome and not being accepted</u> (from above) enabled him to <u>stop creating those kind of thoughts.</u> But after some effort, <u>he was finally able to wish himself wellbeing and happiness.</u> The fundamental assumption that he was <u>creating those sort of thoughts</u>, as opposed to the organizer, empowered him to alleviate his suffering.</p>	<p>His mind started clearing up once he was able to break through the negative thoughts and genuinely feel the wish of wellbeing for himself.</p>
21	<p><u>Then a thought arose in me that I have not wasted anything.</u> So now <u>I try to find some goodness in this whole</u></p>	<p>Then a thought arose in him that he had not wasted anything. Now he was trying to find some goodness in this</p>	<p>Amidst the newfound clarity of mind, a <u>thought arose in him that he had not wasted</u></p>	<p>Rahul perspective on the situation became more positive as he</p>

	<p><i>thing, because now I feel that my time is wasted so I felt everything is negative, but when my mind is clear I should find some goodness in this whole process. So then I realized that I have produced an article, ya, so it has not been accepted to publish, but article is with me, I have produced something. So I felt that you know, I have not wasted anything you know. Though my article would not be published in this magazine, I learned a lot in the process of writing because you know, I felt that you know the topic that I wrote, after I complete the article, I had more clear idea about that subject, more than um before. So in that very process of writing, actually I learn a lot too. It is with me, I have not wasted time...and even you know, maybe I could give article to someone else you know. This isn't really an academic article but more towards a general audience.</i></p>	<p>whole thing. First he thought that his time was wasted so he felt that everything about the situation is negative. But when his mind was clear, he found some goodness in the whole process. He realized that he had produced an article. It hasn't been accepted to be published, but the article is with him and he has produced something meaningful. So he felt that he had not wasted anything. Though his article would not be published in this magazine, he learned a lot in the process of writing. After he completed the article, he had a clearer idea about the subject, more than before. The article is with him and he has not wasted his time. Maybe he could give the article to someone else.</p>	<p><u>anything</u>. The release of the judgment of wasting effort enabled him to try to <u>find some goodness in this whole thing</u>. He realized that <u>he had produced an article</u>. Even though it wouldn't be published there and then, he <u>learned a lot in the process of writing</u> and may be able to publish it in the future. While Rahul was initially focused on the closure of good possibilities, now he is open to new and more positive possibilities such as learning from the writing process and potentially publishing the article in the future.</p>	<p>became aware of good possibilities to glean from the experience.</p>
22	<p><u>First I felt good about myself. Then I was trying to think some goodness in this lady</u> So only after I make myself peaceful I find some goodness in this process and then only I actually direct my you know, thoughts to her, and find some goodness, <u>whether she has demonstrated any goodness in that interaction</u>.</p>	<p>First, Rahul felt good about himself. Then, he was trying to think some goodness in the organizer. So only after he made himself peaceful was he able to find some goodness in this process. Then he directed his thoughts to her to see whether she has demonstrated any goodness in that interaction.</p>	<p>After he felt <u>good about himself</u>, Rahul was able to open up to <u>the possibility to think some goodness in this lady</u>. Having found some peace and kindness for himself, he directed his thoughts to her to see whether she <u>has demonstrated any goodness in their interaction</u>. This new possibility became possible under the condition of</p>	<p>Having found some good for himself in this situation, Rahul turned his attention to organizer to find some good in the organizer.</p>

			concern for his own wellbeing. Finding good in her benefits him as well.	
23	I tried to <u>imagine myself as her</u> <i>So this is what we do in loving-kindness meditation, we try to <u>put ourselves in other person's shoes</u>.</i>	He tried to imagine himself as her and asserted that that is what practitioners of loving-kindness meditation do. They put themselves in other person's shoes.	Trying to find good in her meant <u>imagining himself as her</u> . Rahul situates the efficacy of loving-kindness meditation in <u>putting ourselves in other person's shoes</u> .	Finding the good in others means empathizing with them.
24	I was trying to understand her situation there. Then I <u>realized that she was merely coordinating this project and she did not have any authority over this project</u> . [What made you able to see her perspective] <i>In the beginning, I am <u>only focusing on the mistake she did</u>, so I kind of you know, my mind is clouded by all these negative things, but now my mind is little bit clear. I didn't realize that in the beginning, it's only later you know, when I was trying this and realized that uh, <u>she is only a kind of mediator</u>, she has no authority over this project.</i>	Rahul was trying to understand her situation. He realized that she was merely coordinating the project and that she didn't have any authority over this project. In the beginning, he was only focusing on the mistake that she made and his mind was clouded by all these negative things. Now his mind is a little bit more clearly. He didn't realize it in the beginning. It's only later when he was trying to realize that she is only a kind of mediator.	As Rahul was actively trying to empathize with her, <u>he realized that she is merely coordinating this project and she did not have direct authority over it</u> . Before this realization, he was only focused on her mistakes. Now he understands that <u>she is only a kind of mediator</u> . The malevolent power she had over him gave way to an understanding of the limits of her power. She now appears far more innocent, finite, and vulnerable.	Rahul realizes the limitations of the organizers power and the limited control she over whether Rahul's article would be accepted.
25	In that case, she <u>cannot be fully responsible for the decision made by the editing committee</u> . <u>Though she could have been better in communicating with me, I realized that she did not do any harm to me purposely</u> . Then I started to feel sympathy for her . <i>So I felt that in the beginning, I put my all anger to her, but now I</i>	In that case, she cannot be fully responsible for the decision made by the committee. Though she could have been better in communicating with him, he realized that she didn't harm him purposely. Then he started feeling sympathy for her. In the begging he put all his anger on to her, but now he realized that	<u>She cannot be fully responsible for the decision made by the editing committee, and therefore did not do any harm to him purposely</u> . <u>She did not make the decision</u> to change the format of the magazine which led to the neglect of his	Rahul limits the scope of the organizer's mistakes to failing to communicate with him.

	<p>realize that she is playing a different role, and she has no power, she is not responsible for the decision made by the committee, <u>she didn't make that decision</u>. The only thing that she has done was that she was delayed in communicating with me. So now her fault is more um (pause) <u>lenient than earlier</u> because now I realize that ah...she hasn't done kind of severe mistake as I, you know, imagine earlier.</p>	<p>she is playing a different role and that she has no power. She is not responsible for the decision made by the committee and she didn't make that decision. The only thing that she had done was delay communication with him. So her fault is more lenient than earlier because she hasn't done the kind of severe mistake that he imagined earlier.</p>	<p>article. Her real mistake was that <u>she could have been better in communicating with him</u>. Her fault is more <u>lenient than earlier</u>, meaning that it was less egregious or severe.</p>	
26	<p>[Would you say understanding that her actions were not purposeful helped you calm down?] yes, because I realized that at worst she <u>was negligent in responding to me, but realized that she is not purposely trying to harm me</u>. She didn't have any intention to harm me ...harm me. [When you first saw her email...] my feeling is that she is you know making this whole problem [and that it's personal, that..that...] I Ya, personal, you feel hurt.</p>	<p>Realizing that her actions were not purposeful helped him calm down because he realized that at worst she was negligent in responding to him. He realized that she was not purposely trying to harm him. When he first saw her original reply his feeling was that she was making the whole problem and he was hurt because it was personal.</p>	<p>Rahul also realized her mistake was also unintentional and she did not target him personally. At <u>worst she was negligent in responding to him, but she is not purposely trying to harm him</u>. Her mistake was not only smaller in scope but it was not related to him, i.e., it wasn't targeting him.</p>	<p>At worst the organizer was negligent and in any case she was not targeting Rahul personally.</p>
27	<p><u>I wrote her an e mail in friendly terms explaining how I felt when I received her e mail but at the same time how I understand her situation.</u> So actually I told her how angry I was when I first saw email, and I just explained to her what I felt. And also, I ...I told her that I understand her situation and that she is not fully responsible for all the decisions.</p>	<p>Rahul wrote her an email in friendly terms explaining how he felt when he received her email. But that at the same time he understood her situation and that she is not fully responsible for all the decisions.</p>	<p>After obtaining a better understanding of the whole situation, Rahul decided to <u>write her an email in friendly terms explaining how he felt when he received the email but at the same time how he understood her situation</u>. This email communicates his new</p>	<p>He then sent her an email describing his grievance but also expressing understanding for the organizer's limited powers.</p>

			understanding of the situation and avoids setting her up to be defensive. It contains an acknowledgment of ambivalence but with a broader and more sympathetic perspective.	
28	<p><u>She replied me with a lot of regret and confessed that she was suffering from migraine and could not work for two days. That is why she could not send me an email informing the change of plan of the committee before I submitted my article</u> [What was it like for you to hear that she had a migraine for two days?] <i>My sympathy grow further and further and I thought that how good...<u>how good that I didn't reply her when I was angry!</u> Um...because ya, so I felt that you know that such a good thing that I didn't reply her and I also felt bad that that I felt angry about her in the beginning, but I am also ok because I later slowly managed to you know, reduce it.</i></p>	The organizer replied to him with a lot of regret and confessed that she was suffering from a migraine and could not work for two days. That is why she could not send him an email informing him about the change of plan of the committee before he submitted the article. Rahul sympathy grew further and further and he thought to himself "how good that I didn't reply to her when I was angry!" But he felt ok because he slowly managed to reduce his anger.	When the organizer replied, <u>she expressed a lot of regret and confessed to suffering from a migraine and could not work for two days.</u> Gaining this knowledge confirmed his newly developed sympathy and compelled it to grow. He was also thankful <u>that he didn't reply to her when he was angry.</u> She had a good reason for failing to communicate and Bpu was coming to realize that. Things could have turned out much differently if he had acted on his original interpretation of the events, namely that her actions were malicious.	Rahul learned from the organizer that she was incapacitated by a migraine, and was therefore relieved that he hadn't acted on his initial anger.
29	<p><i>And also, my whole problem was that I spending the whole night writing article. <u>It is not her fault too, it is my decision to spend all night</u> (chuckle). She didn't ask me to spend whole night writing this (laughs).</i></p>	Rahul's whole problem was that he was spending the whole night writing the article. It is not her fault either as it was his decision to spend all night. She never asked him to spend the whole night writing. In the	Rahul begins to realize his contribution for the situation. He takes responsibility for choosing to write all night. <u>It is not her fault that he wrote all night,</u>	Rahul takes responsibility for choosing to work all night and comes to a better understanding of the complexities of the situation.

	<p><u>In the beginning I was projecting everything to her, but now I begin to see more detail and then...and we can see different conditions create this situation, and not any one person is responsible for the whole thing</u></p>	<p>beginning, he was projecting everything to her, but now he began to see in more detail. He could see that different conditions created this situation and not any one person is responsible for the whole thing.</p>	<p><u>and it was his decision to do so. In the beginning, he was projecting all the blame for his distress onto her. Now he realizes that different conditions created this situation and that not any one person is responsible for the whole thing.</u> Both parties made decisions that co-created this situation. Rahul was eager to write the article as evidenced by his eagerness to complete it and his self-imposed deadline. It was not the organizer's fault that he spent all night. Yes she could have responded to him in spite of the migraine or at least informed him of the format change as soon as she found out, but he made the choice to write all night.</p>	
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Jane

#	Meaning Unit	First Transformation	Second Transformation	Situated Theme
1	<p><u>About a year after my husband died, a friend invited me to join her in attending a women's group that met once a month for lunch. I was still in the process of grieving and dealing with a big lifestyle change so it seemed that it would be a positive move for me to become more involved outside of my own issues.</u> [can you say something more about this uh this sense or desire to want to be involved um...outside of your own issues] <i>Um (pause) I guess I just knew that it was time for me to get outside of of the grieving uh that I you know the lifestyle change and the grieving and that I needed to reach out and to be with other people more, so...ya.</i> [So you were going through a difficult period because uh you were still grieving for your husband] <i>When there is a death with somebody so</i></p>	<p>About a year after her husband died, A friend invited Jane to join her in attending a women's group that met once a month for lunch. She was still in the process of grieving her forty nine year old marriage and dealing with a big lifestyle change. When there is a death with somebody so close, your life changes at every level and life is different. So it seemed that it would be a positive change for her to become more involved outside of her own issues. She wanted to get outside of grieving and needed to reach out and be with other people. Jane didn't feel like it but knew it was something she needed to do.</p>	<p><u>About a year after her husband of forty nine years died</u>, Jane was thinking about <u>getting outside of her grieving</u>. Her life had changed on so many levels, but she thought it would be a positive move for her to <u>become more involved outside of her own issues</u>. <u>A friend invited Jane to join her in attending a women's group that met once a month for lunch</u>. Jane saw this as a <u>good opportunity to reach out and be with other people</u>. She was beginning to come out of her shell and connect with other human beings in spite of her continued grieving. <u>She didn't feel like it but knew it was something she needed to do</u>. In spite of her loss, she found the courage to reach out to others because she knew that staying connected was the right thing to do.</p>	<p>One year after grieving her husband, Jane decided to take advantage of a friend's invitation in order to do reach out to other people.</p>

	<p><i>close...your...your life changes at every level and it was um...there was some financial...but there was more like my life is so different now. And so um and it's not going to go back to what it was so I better start thinking about this new or different life I had and this seemed like an opportunity to start to do that. [So you kind of wanted to come out of your shell a little bit] I <u>didn't feel like it but I knew it was something that I needed to do.</u> [If you don't mind me asking, how long were you married to your husband?] <u>I was married 49 years.</u> [Wow that is a long time] <i>it is a long time.</i></i></p>			
2	<p><u>The friend who asked me to join was someone who I knew for a few years and used to attend women's interest meetings with me in the community.</u></p>	<p>The friend who asked her to join was someone who she knew for a few years and used to attend women's interest meeting with Jane in the community.</p>	<p>Jane begins to develop the nature of the relationship between herself and the person she became angry with. <u>Her friend who asked her to join was someone she had known for a few years</u> because Jane used to attend women's interest groups with her in the community.</p>	<p>She had known this friend for a number of years because they attended women's interest groups together.</p>
3	<p><u>I knew that we did not have the same religious or spiritual practices although I did adhered to her</u></p>	<p>Although Jane did adhere to her friend's beliefs earlier in life, Jane knew that her friend did not have the same religious or</p>	<p>She knew that her friend <u>did not have the same religious or spiritual practices.</u> Even though once upon a time they did,</p>	<p>Jane disagrees with her friend's spiritual</p>

	<p>beliefs earlier in my life. I knew that her style of religious practices was not for me at this time. <i>Um I think throughout my life and when I was married to my husband except the last few years, we went to a um...a mainline Christian church. I grew up that way. [Mainline protestant or is mainline a denomination?] Protestant. So then I began to feel like uh...that way of practicing religion or practicing spirituality was to expect that someone else would save us or um take care of us and ...that started to really make me uncomfortable. I began to feel like I had been given everything that I needed to take care of myself and to so I decided to save myself.</i></p>	<p>spiritual practices anymore. She knew that her friend's style of religious practices was not for her. Throughout her life when she was married to her husband (with the exception of the last few years), Jane went to a mainline Christian church. So she then began to feel like that way of practicing religion or spirituality was to expect that someone else would save them or take care of them. That belief started to make her uncomfortable. Jane felt like she had everything she needed to take care of herself so she decided to save herself.</p>	<p><u>Jane knew that her friend's style of religious practices was not for her at this time.</u> This difference between them stems from Jane's critical attitude towards the idea of being saved by someone else. So her friend's beliefs <u>started to really make her uncomfortable.</u> She had come to feel that only she can save herself, so her friend's belief that others can save her aggravated Jane.</p>	<p>practices because Jane believes that only she can save herself.</p>
4	<p><i>A part of it was um that I had the feeling and I think was probably true that if you are not in a <u>mainline...religion</u>, you probably know about this... <u>you can be ostracized and judged...ya...so I felt like I was the only one in this group who wasn't a</u></i></p>	<p>A part of Jane's it was that she felt that if she was not in a mainline religious, then she could be ostracized and judged. She felt like she was the only one in this group who wasn't a part of that group's religious denomination. She wasn't</p>	<p>A part of Jane's complicated feelings towards her friend stemmed from <u>not being in the mainline religion.</u> She feared <u>being ostracized and judged.</u> She felt like <u>she was the only one in the women's group that wasn't a part of that group's religious</u></p>	<p>In spite of Jane's fear of being ostracized and judged for not belonging to her friend's mainstream religion, she still wanted</p>

	<p><u>part of that group. I didn't want (chuckles) I wasn't ready yet to come out and say "this isn't for me (chuckle)"</u> [(chuckle)]</p>	<p>ready to just come out and say "this isn't for me."</p>	<p><u>denomination</u>. Yet she still wanted to keep good relations with the women's group, and so <u>she wasn't ready yet to come out and say "this isn't for me"</u> for fear of being ostracized and judged. A tension is building between wanting to be accepted but also wanting to assert her differences with her friend.</p>	<p>to keep a good relationship with the women's group (2).</p>
5	<p><u>The format of the meetings was to have lunch and then have a time of "sharing." Each person was expected to talk about the events in her life and to ask for prayers for the problems they were dealing with.</u> So <i>um when I (pause) when people were asking for everyone to pray that Jesus would take care of them...it...what can I say...it...it didn't work for me and I didn't have ...I didn't want to say to them...I don't want this...it just didn't work. I just sat there.</i> [ok, so you just kind of let it slide so to speak] Yes I did.</p>	<p>The format of the meetings was to have lunch and then have a time of "sharing." Each person was expected to talk about the events in her life and to ask for prayers for the problems they were dealing with. When people were asking for everyone to pray that Jesus would take care of them, it didn't work for Jane and she didn't have anything to say to them. So she just sat there and let it slide.</p>	<p><u>The format of the women's group meetings was to have lunch and then a time of sharing. Each person in the group was supposed to talk about the events in her life and ask for prayers for the problems they were dealing with.</u> Jane was still grieving for her husband and so asking for prayers for such a personal matter <u>just didn't work</u>. When group members would pray that Jesus take care of them, Jane <u>just sat there</u> brewing in discomfort. However, she just let the prayer requests slide without saying anything in order to maintain good rapport with the group.</p>	<p>Jane experienced awkward tension during the women's group when other's asked for prayer because she was not comfortable with that practice.</p>
6	<p><u>Some women let it pass and for most part and did not ask for prayers. Sometimes they would talk about marriages of their grandchildren or illness in other family members. I found this part difficult to talk</u></p>	<p>Some women let it pass and for the most part did not ask for prayers. Sometimes they would talk about marriages of their grandchildren or illness in other family members. She found this part difficult to talk about because she</p>	<p>Jane wasn't the only one in the group who didn't participate as <u>some women let it pass for the most part and did not ask for prayers</u>. She found the topic of her husband difficult to talk about <u>because she was still in a</u></p>	<p>Jane didn't want to prolong her grieving so like some other women in the group, she kept</p>

	<p><u>about because I was still at a place of sadness but most of all I did not want to prolong my grieving by talking about it.</u> And I must say that in that I...it wasn't that I didn't want to talk about...but it wasn't the place that I wanted to talk about it. [You didn't feel comfortable enough to share in that particular situation] And I talked to um other people who uh gave me support and understanding so...</p>	<p>was still at a place of sadness but most of all she did not want to prolong her grieving by talking about it. It wasn't that Jane didn't want to talk about it, but it wasn't the place that she wanted to talk about it. She had talked to other people who gave her support and understanding.</p>	<p><u>place of sadness and did not want to prolong her grieving by talking about it.</u> She had shared her sadness in other situations where she felt more comfortable, but this situation made her too uncomfortable to do so. Still, not sharing was more tolerable because some other women didn't share either. Jane was able to tolerate the situation without saying anything that might alienate her from the other women in the group.</p>	<p>silent during prayers and didn't ask for others to pray for her either.</p>
7	<p>Well, um, a little history. Um I stayed with my grandmother summers when I was a young girl. <u>And she was very much in the mainline group of religious teachings and um...so she told me that every time I use the bathroom, I needed to read from the bible and I did that. I was comfortable with that, but then I realized that she was doing some things I didn't like. She was pretty judgmental about Catholics...about anybody who didn't belong to her church or anybody who wasn't of her political persuasion.</u> I loved her. She was a great person. <u>That was</u></p>	<p>A little history...When she was a young girl, Jane stayed with her grandmother in the summers. Her grandmother was very much in the mainline group of religious teachings. She told Jane that every time she used the bathroom, she needed to read from the bible and Jane did that. She was comfortable with that, but then she realized that her grandmother was doing some things that she didn't like. Jane grandmother was pretty judgmental about people from a different denomination and anybody who didn't belong to her church or anybody who was not of her political persuasion. Jane loved</p>	<p>Jane is providing a backdrop for some of her internal religious conflict. When she was a young girl, she would spend summers with her grandmother, <u>who was very much in the mainline group of religious teachings.</u> Jane loved her grandmother very much, but also realized that <u>her grandmother was doing some things that she didn't like. She was pretty judgmental about anybody who didn't belong to her church or anybody who wasn't of her political persuasion.</u> Although Jane loved her grandmother very much, she provided a background that made Jane aware of Judging.</p>	<p>Jane recalls that some of her difficulties with the mainstream religion originated with her grandmother's tendency to be judgmental.</p>

	<u>a background that made me aware of judging.</u>	her. She was a great person, but that was the background that made Jane aware of judging and realizing that she did a lot of that also.	Jane's friend was exhibiting some of this behavior that she didn't like.	
8	A year after beginning the group I wanted to go to Sedona so I invited my friend and another friend to accompany us. It seemed like a good match for enjoying the area together. We did some sightseeing, swimming and a little hiking.	A year after beginning the women's group Jane wanted to go to Sedona so she invited her friend and another friend to accompany them. It seemed like a good match for enjoying the area together. We did some sightseeing, swimming, and a little hiking.	One year after beginning the women's group, Jane wanted to go to Sedona so she <u>invited her religious friend and another friend to accompany them</u> . They initially seemed like a good match for enjoying the area together. Things went well at first as they enjoyed swimming, hiking and sightseeing together. Everything was going well.	One year after the group started, Jane invited her religious friend and another friend to go on a vacation together.
9	Then one evening as we sat around the living room chatting, the <u>topic came to religious beliefs</u>. The <u>third person in the party made some strong statements against my friend's religious beliefs and practices</u>.	Then one evening as they sat around the living room chatting, the topic came to religious beliefs. The third person in the party made some strong comments against her friend's religious beliefs and practices.	Then one evening as Jane, her religious friend, and the third friend sat around the living room chatting, <u>the topic came to religious beliefs. The third person in the party made some strong statements against her friend's religious beliefs and practices</u> . Jane's conflicts about her beliefs were suddenly presented to her in the form of this conversation, and there was no easy way to avoid it as she normally did in the women's group. It would be much more difficult to contain her ambivalences this time around.	Jane found herself in an awkward position when the three friends sat around the living room and started a conversation revolving around religious beliefs.
10	<u>Without thinking of what I wanted to say I blurted out a full agreement with the other person against my friend.</u> There must	Without thinking of what she wanted to say, Jane blurted out a full agreement with the other person against her friend.	Jane's ambivalence came to the fore when <u>without thinking of what she wanted to say, she blurted out a full agreement with</u>	Jane expressed her ambivalence by fully

	<p><i>have been a dialogue between the two of them. And then, the other friend came down really hard. She said <u>you know...this is bullshit to me and I don't want any part of it. I pretty much said ok!</u></i></p>	<p>There must have been a dialogue between the two of them and <u>then the other friend came down really hard. She said <u>you know...this is bullshit to me and I don't want any part of it. Jane pretty much said OK!</u></u></p>	<p><u>the other person against her friend.</u> The ambivalence that she had been withholding manifest itself in the form of a full agreement in affirmation of the criticisms weighed against her religious friend's beliefs. <u>The third friend came down really hard and insinuated that this is all bullshit to me and I don't want any part of it.</u> Jane impulsively agreed and <u>pretty much said OK.</u></p>	<p>agreeing with the criticisms weighed against her religious friend.</p>
1 1	<p>It was not a fair deal (chuckle). <i>Well for me, <u>that's like a triangle which can cause all kinds of problems</u> and it was doing that. Because if it had been just me and someone else, it wouldn't have been that bad.</i></p>	<p>It was not a fair deal. For Jane, that's like a triangle which can cause all kinds of problems and it was doing that. If it had been just Jane and someone else, it wouldn't have been that bad.</p>	<p>Jane felt like the whole situation was <u>not a fair deal</u> because she was forced to take sides. It formed a <u>triangle which can cause all kinds of problems.</u> Jane construed the situation as the cause of her reaction, the implication being that she felt bad about her and the third friend ganging up against the religious friend.</p>	<p>Jane believes that the situation compelled her to agree with the third person against their religious friend.</p>
1 2	<p>[So I'm wondering if this kind of blurting out was a chance for you to <u>express what you really feel instead of just having to sit down and put up with something</u>]. <i>Absolutely...absolutely...because <u>I had an ally there too</u> (both laugh).</i></p>	<p>However, Jane also acknowledges that the situation presented her with a chance to express how she really felt instead of having to sit down and put up with something. She had an ally there too.</p>	<p>Jane acknowledges that her previous frustrations came to the forth because she had a <u>chance to express what she really felt instead of having to sit down and put up with something.</u> <u>Having an ally there</u> compelled her as well.</p>	<p>She also acknowledges that the situation presented her with an opportunity to voice her true feelings.</p>
1 3	<p>After the return to the monthly group I <u>was very aware that my friend had used such statements regarding difficult people in her life</u> such as her</p>	<p>After the return to the monthly women's group, Jane was very aware that her friend has used such statements regarding difficult people in her life</p>	<p>After the return to the monthly group, Jane began taking inventory of her religious friend's judgmental statements. She became <u>very aware</u></p>	<p>Upon resuming the monthly women's interest group</p>

	<p>daughter's brother-in-law, her wayward son, and her ex-husband as "the lowest piece of humanity." [So what's it like for you to hear someone described as the "lowest piece of humanity?"] <i>Really ticked me off. It was like hey (laughs) look what you're doing to yourself first of all when she described somebody very close to her in that way. And then I began to think...If you're spirituality is so great (pause) why are you doing that?</i></p>	<p>such as her daughter's brother-in-law, her wayward son, and her ex-husband as "the lowest piece of humanity." Hearing that really ticked her off. It was like she wanted to tell her friend "look at what you're doing to yourself first of all" when she described someone very close to her in that way. Then Jane began thinking: "if you're spiritually so great, why are you doing that?"</p>	<p><u>that her friend had used such statements regarding difficult people in her life the "lowest piece of humanity."</u> Hearing this <u>really ticked her off</u>. Jane began experiencing more critical thoughts over time such as "if you're spiritually so great, why are you doing that?" The incident had compelled Jane to become more and more critical of her friend and to focus on her judgmental tendencies. It is as if the incident that happened in Sedona compelled Jane to have to justify her reaction by looking for her friend's judgmental statements.</p>	<p>meetings, Jane began focusing on her friend's judgmental statements and was growing more critical of her over time.</p>
1 4	<p>I felt a great attitude shift in myself...mainly because I thought I would be listed in her thinking as one of these "lowest pieces of humanity"</p>	<p>Jane felt a great attitude shift in herself, mainly because she thought that she would be listed in her friend's thinking as one of these "lowest pieces of humanity."</p>	<p>Jane began experiencing <u>an attitude shift in herself</u>. She was growing more defensive because she <u>was afraid of being listed in her friend's thinking as one of "the lowest pieces of humanity."</u> The thought of being judged in that way was threatening.</p>	<p>Jane's defensiveness was growing as she feared being judged as one of the lowest pieces of humanity.</p>
1 5	<p>I was angry with her because she came off as being very self-righteous.</p>	<p>Jane was angry with her friend because she came off as being very self-righteous.</p>	<p>Jane was sensing a sense of superiority and arrogance in her friend and <u>in turn was angry with her because she came off as being very self-righteous</u>. How could her friend have such an attitude? That is just unacceptable.</p>	<p>She was developing a sense that her friend felt superior to her and others.</p>

1 6	<u>I felt stiff with shoulders pulled forward and arms crossed in front of me.</u>	She felt stiff with shoulders pulled forward and arms crossed in front of her.	Jane started experiencing the anger in her body; she <u>felt still with shoulders pulled forward and arms crossed in front of her</u> as if she was protecting herself from her friend's judgments.	Jane's was feeling the anger in her body in the form of stiffness in her shoulders and crossing her arms.
1 7	<u>I felt that I wanted to withdraw from her and not to be around her. I found myself not wanting to go to the meetings....finding any reason not to go.</u>	Jane felt that she wanted to withdraw from her friend and not be around her. She found herself not wanting to go to the meeting and finding any reason not to go.	Jane's ambivalence towards her friend got to the point where she <u>wanted to withdraw from her and not be around her.</u> She was avoiding the women's interest group meetings and <u>finding any reason not to go</u> in order to avoid her friend. Jane was willing to give up going to this monthly meeting that she enjoys just in order to avoid her friend.	Her ambivalence towards her friend got to the point of avoidance.
1 8	<u>About this time we used the Loving-Kindness meditation at meditation center. We were practicing using the meditation for ourselves, which was hard for me. I wanted to by-pass that place but continued to do it for myself.</u>	About this time the Buddhist congregation that Jane belonged to used Loving-Kindness at the meditation center. They were practicing using the meditation for themselves which was hard for her. She wanted to bypass that place but continued to do it for herself.	Now Jane introduces her practice of Loving-Kindness. Around the time of the conflict with her friend, she used <u>Loving-Kindness meditation at the meditation center.</u> The congregation was practicing using Loving-Kindness meditation for themselves, which was hard for Jane. She wanted to bypass doing the practice for herself in order to move on to others as is typical with the practice, but she continued to do it for herself anyway.	Around the time of the conflict with her friend, Jane was learning Loving-Kindness meditation and was practicing it for herself in spite of some difficulty doing so.

1 9	<p><u>Some interesting things began to happen...I could think more kindly of myself when I made a mistake...like saying something sharp to a family member, or going too fast in a 55 mph zone, or “hogging” a lane when I was swimming.</u></p>	<p>Some interesting things began to happen. Jane could think more kindly of herself when she made a mistake like saying something sharp to a family member or going too fast in a 55mph an hour zone or “hogging” a lane when she was swimming.</p>	<p><u>Some interesting things began to happen</u> to Jane as a result of practicing Loving-Kindness meditation for herself. <u>She could think more kindly of herself when she made a mistake</u> like saying something sharp to a family member or speeding or taking up a swimming lane. She was growing more aware of her imperfections but in the spirit of self-forgiveness.</p>	<p>Jane’s practice of Loving-Kindness meditation enabled her to become more forgiving towards herself when she made mistakes.</p>
2 0	<p><u>It felt like a great relief. I didn’t have to be perfect and I would continue to make mistakes, some more costly than those listed above. I think that’s really important that <u>when we focus on our mistakes, that’s where we are living well, that’s where we’re focusing.</u></u></p>	<p>Jane felt great relief. She didn’t have to be perfect and she would continue to make mistakes, some more costly than those listed above. She thinks that it is really important that we focus on our mistakes because that’s when we are living well, that’s when we are focusing.</p>	<p>Recognizing and accepting her mistakes felt <u>like a great relief</u> for Jane. She knew that she would continue to make mistakes but it didn’t bother her because she believes that <u>when we focus on our mistakes, that’s when we are living well, that’s when we are focusing.</u> There was something liberating for Jane about the experience of knowing and forgiving her errors.</p>	<p>Recognizing and accepting her imperfections empowered Jane to feel vital and focused in her life.</p>
2 1	<p><u>I could even forgive myself for endorsing the statements of the third person at the Sedona vacation against my friend.</u></p>	<p>Jane could even forgive herself for endorsing the statements of the third person at the Sedona vacation against her friend.</p>	<p>A fundamental shift in understanding occurs for Jane when <u>she could even forgive herself for endorsing the statements of the third person at the Sedona vacation against her friend.</u> At first she felt fully justified. Now she is questioning that justification by considering that her actions may have been mistaken and that she needs to forgive herself for it.</p>	<p>Jane recognizes that her behavior during the vacation may have been mistaken in the sense that she needed to forgive herself for it.</p>

2 2	<u>I could also decide that if someone viewed me as a “lowest piece of humanity” that it didn’t have to apply to me unless I allowed it to.</u>	She could also decide that if someone viewed her as the “lowest piece of humanity” that it didn’t have to apply to her unless she allowed it to.	Jane’s sense of responsibility grew even further when she realized <u>that she could also decide that if someone viewed her as “the lowest piece of humanity” that it didn’t have to apply to her unless she allowed it.</u> Recognizing her mistakes paradoxically empowered her to protect herself from her friend’s perceived judgments. Being imperfect means others are imperfect. Being personally offended by others’ judgments contains the implicit assumption that they’re judgment might be true.	Jane gains an empowered sense of responsibility towards her friend’s attitudes such that Jane could protect herself from these (real or imagined) judgments.
2 3	<u>The time came when I knew it was time to say a Loving-Kindness meditation for my friend.</u>	The time came when Jane knew that it was time to say a Loving-Kindness meditation for her friend.	Having recognized her some of her contribution to the conflict between herself and her friend, Jane decided <u>she knew that it was time to say Loving-Kindness meditation for her friend.</u> Jane now sees that she is a fallible human being just like her friend.	Recognizing her own shortcomings enabled DG to recognize that they are both imperfect which in turn compelled her to practice Loving-Kindness meditation for her friend.
2 4	<u>Nothing much changed at the meeting. My friend continued to use her descriptions of people in her life who caused her grief and shortly after make a</u>	Nothing much changed at the meeting. Jane’s friend continued to use her descriptions of people in her life who caused her grief, and shortly after make a commitment to	In spite of her new insights, and in spite of practicing Loving-Kindness meditation for her friend, <u>nothing much changed at the meetings</u> initially. Jane’s friend	However, Jane continued to struggle to accept her friend in spite of her

	<p>commitment to pray for others who ask for prayers. <u>It was all stuff that “ticked me off” and angered me. I felt tight and withdrawn.</u></p>	<p>pray for others who ask for prayers. It was all the stuff that “ticked her off” and angered her. She felt tight and withdrawn.</p>	<p><u>continued to say all the stuff that “ticked her off” and angered her. She still felt tight and withdrawn.</u> The tension between them was still there.</p>	<p>new insights and in spite of practicing Loving-Kindness meditation for her friend.</p>
2 5	<p><u>In the next weeks some real insights about myself came forward. I was becoming aware of how much I was judging her in her descriptions of people in her life, and perhaps me as well, realizing that I was doing the same things in my thinking as she was doing, only in a different way.</u></p>	<p>In the next weeks, some real insights about herself came forward. She was becoming aware of how much she was judging her friend’s description of people in her life, and perhaps her as well. She realized that she was doing the same things in her thinking as her friend was doing, only in a different way.</p>	<p>And then <u>in the next weeks, some real insights about herself came forward.</u> Jane’s awareness of her responsibility in the tension between them grew even further. <u>She was becoming aware of how much she was judging her friend in her descriptions of people in her life. Jane realized that she was doing the same things in her thinking as her friend was doing, only in a different way,</u> namely in thought only—and not in speech.</p>	<p>Then a new insight came forward, namely that she was judging her friend in thought just as her friend was judging others in speech.</p>
2 6	<p><u>Also I was aware that I did not want to disclose to her or other people my form of spirituality for fear of being ostracized by others and not fitting in.</u></p>	<p>Also Jane was aware that she did not want to disclose to her friend or other people her form of spirituality for fear of being ostracized by others and not fitting in.</p>	<p>Jane goes even further to recognize that perhaps the only reason she didn’t vocalize her judgment was that <u>she did not want to disclose to her friend or other people her new form of spirituality for fear of being ostracized.</u></p>	<p>As Jane’s awareness grew, the differences between Jane and her friend diminish even further.</p>
2 7	<p><u>I was becoming aware how much the Loving-Kindness meditation for myself was like purifying myself.</u> [Purifying yourself of what?] <i>From these um...attitudes and judgments that I have</i></p>	<p>Jane was becoming aware of how much the Loving-Kindness meditation for herself was purifying herself from the attitudes and judgments that she had carried around without knowing.</p>	<p>Jane’s reflections on her self continued as she was becoming aware how doing Loving-Kindness meditation for herself <u>was like purifying herself from the attitudes and judgments that she has carried around without knowing.</u> Her focus was</p>	<p>She realized that negative judgment of others was something to be purified.</p>

	<u>carried with me and not known...</u>		now on negative judgment itself as an act that she is responsible for its consequences for herself and others.	
28	<u>...[Jane was] not realizing how they affected me in a negative way and how knowing that to be aware of them and to let them pass by...those thoughts to pass by, is a way of purifying myself from making judgments on others. So the judgments on others are more hurtful to me than they are to someone else.</u>	Jane was not realizing how the judgments affected her in a negative way, and how knowing that to be aware of them and to let them pass by is a way of purifying herself from making judgments on others. The judgments of others are more hurtful to her than they are to someone else.	Before starting this process of self-reflecting on the process of judgments of others, Jane was <u>not realizing how they affected her in a negative way</u> . Now she realizes that she has the power and choice to let them go because she knows that <u>judgments on others are more hurtful to her than they are to someone else</u> . Specifically, her judgment of her friend was causing her to suffer more than it was causing her friend to suffer.	Negative judgment of others is something to be purified because it hurts Jane more than it hurts other people.
29	Oh what a relief for this awareness! It made me take a real look at myself and how I had contributed to our strained relationship and my anger with her [Can you expand on the sense of relief a little bit?] <i>I felt relaxed. I felt like um my body was more relaxed. I wasn't sitting like this at the meetings (shows tense posture) which, you know, is good control when you can put your arms in front of you.</i>	Jane thought to herself "Oh what a relief for this awareness!" It made her take a real look at herself and how she had strained the relationship with her anger at her friend. This sense of relief helped Jane feel relaxed. She felt like her body was more relaxed. She wasn't sitting in a tense posture with her arms in front of her like she used to at the meetings.	Jane's newfound awareness <u>made her take a real look at herself and how she had contributed to her strained relationship and her anger with her friend</u> . Recognizing this contribution led Jane to feel relieved in her body and mind. Her posture was no longer defensive at the meeting, and she felt generally more relaxed. The paradox here is that critical self-awareness brought relief instead of added tension because this critical awareness is done in the spirit of relieving suffering for everyone.	Jane's knowledge of her contribution to the tension with her friend brought her great relief.
30	I felt more relaxed and light like I was not carrying around a bag	Jane felt more relaxed and light like she was not	Jane's body describes her realization with the bodily	Jane's anger at her

	<p>of bricks on my shoulders</p>	<p>carrying around a back of bricks on her shoulders.</p>	<p><u>metaphor of being more relaxed like she was not carrying around a bag of bricks on her shoulders.</u> The burden of her begrudging anger towards her friend was like a bag of bricks that she was able to drop and finally relax.</p>	<p>friend was like a bag of bricks and her relief came from finally putting the burden down.</p>
3 1	<p><u>It took some more months of doing this before things started to change. It started with my attitude of recognizing that I was judging when my friend spoke. I was aware but I just told those thoughts that I did not want to judge another person anymore and that they could move on. I felt less closed in, fewer times that I found myself with arms crossed in from me so as to be in big control. I was still able to monitor my thoughts and be aware of my breathing and the ability to relax.</u></p>	<p>It took some months of doing this before things started to change. It started with Jane's attitude of recognizing that she was judging her friend when her friend spoke. She was aware but just told those thoughts that she did not want to judge another person anymore and that these thoughts could move on. She felt less closed in, and fewer times that she found herself with arms crossed in front of her so as to be in big control</p>	<p>The change Jane experienced was not magical or instantaneous. <u>It took more months of doing this before things started to change</u> between her and her friend. The process involved being aware of judgments towards her friend and letting them go. Over time, there were <u>fewer times that she found herself with arms crossed in front of her so as to be in big control</u>. She could relax more and focus on her own self-process instead of on her friend's expressions.</p>	<p>Jane's experience of change was gradual and involved an active determination to let go of her judgmental thoughts towards her friend.</p>
3 2	<p><u>I continued to be attentive to my friend when she spoke and made friendly comments. We laughed about funny things that happened in our lives and spent less time dwelling on problems</u></p>	<p>She continued to be attentive to her friend when she spoke and made friendly comments. They laughed about funny things in their lives and spent less time dwelling on problems.</p>	<p>Jane was now being more attentive to her friend when <u>she spoke and made friendly comments</u>. Jane noticed her friend's friendly comments that were previously invisible. <u>They laughed together about funny things in their lives and spent less time dwelling on problems.</u> Having changed her attitude towards her friend, she could relax and focus</p>	<p>Jane's changed attitude affected her friend as well as she became more relaxed and less serious.</p>

			on the positive, which in turn prompted her friend to be less serious and more relaxed.	
3 3	This has been difficult to write as <u>I realized how much I was influenced by my anger toward my friend and had never realized I could do anything about it.</u>	This account has been difficult for Jane to write as she realized how much she was influenced by her anger towards her friend, and had never realized that she could do something about it.	Jane admits that it was difficult for her to write this account because <u>she realized how much she was influenced by her anger toward her friend and had never realized that she could do anything about it.</u> It was difficult for her to admit to herself that she had a part in the creation of her own anger, and that she had the power to do something with the anger.	The difficult part of writing this account was that Jane had to admit her role in the conflict with her friend and accept that she had power over her reactions and judgments.
3 4	The wonderful thing about writing it was that I can now see how doing loving-kindness meditation <u>affects the person who does it as well as those to whom it is directed.</u> I can say that Loving-Kindness meditation is a practice that is very worthwhile and that I have the intention to continue to practice for the rest of my life.	The wonderful thing about writing the account was that she can now see how doing Loving-Kindness meditation affects the person who does it as well as those to whom it is directed. Jane can say that Loving-Kindness meditation is a practice that is very much worthwhile and that she has the intention to continue to practice for the rest of her life.	Jane concludes that <u>Loving-Kindness meditation affects the person who does it as well as those to whom it is directed.</u> She sees it as a positive transformative force in her life and the life of those who she does it for, and intends to practice it for the rest of her life.	Jane asserts that Loving-Kindness meditation positively affects the person who is doing it and the person that it is done for.